

File No. 9110016

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CRAIG MONAHAN

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CASTORINA: Today is October 9th, 2001. I'm Ron Castorina. I'm at Engine 24, Ladder 5.

FIREFIGHTER MONAHAN: Craig Monahan, firefighter first grade, Ladder 5.

MR. CASTORINA: Present is --

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt.

Q. Firefighter Monahan, can you tell us on September 11th the events that took place that day, where you were working and going through all the details?

A. I was off duty. When I saw the second plane hit, I drove in to work from Staten Island. I had two other firefighters with me, Steven Altini and Joe Ray. Joe Ray and I both had our bunker gear with us because our last set of tours we had been detailed to other companies. We just so happened to have gone home with our bunker gear. Altini didn't have his.

So I rushed in, and I got here pretty quick. I parked in front of 90 West. I came through the tunnel, Battery Tunnel, parked in front of 90 West. Joe Ray and I geared up, put our gear on. We started heading north towards

the towers. Altini, we left him at the rig. He started heading towards -- the command center at first. I think he ended up going back to 10 and 10 to get gear.

Anyhow, as we were walking through the streets, the West Side Highway was littered with body parts. You could identify a hand, small pieces, but obviously body parts. It had that odor. I've been through this before.

Q. What time is this now, approximately?

A. I have no idea.

Q. Both towers were still up?

A. The two towers were both standing, and they were roaring.

Q. Both planes had hit at this point when you were there?

A. Right. I left Staten Island at -- it wasn't my house; it was somewhere else. But I was on the south shore of Staten Island. I went into somebody's house, because they said that a plane hit the tower, and they were showing me on their TV.

As we turned it on and looked at it, the second plane hit. I knew right then that we

were losing companies and mine was probably going to be one of them. So I was going in, and the other two guys came with me.

We got there really fast. I drove on the shoulder or however it took to get here. I parked in front of 90 West, left the keys in my truck in case anybody needed to move it. The highway was kind of clear as far as vehicles. There was no traffic going through. It really wasn't congested with rigs at that spot.

I saw an ambulance. Dr. Kelly was getting on the ambulance with I don't know who. They were putting someone on the ambulance. That was before we got to the south pedestrian bridge, before Liberty Street. You could see airplane parts just littered across the street, across the highway.

Joe and I walked north. My goal was to find Ladder 5, my company's rig, and try to retrace their steps and find them and help them. As we were walking past the towers, it was just unbelievable. You had to watch where you were walking. You didn't want to step on a scalp or a knee joint or something like that. There was

just stuff everywhere.

We kept going north. We were just on the edge of the sidewalk. We got in front of One World Trade Center, and I looked in. It looked like it was dark in there. I had to find 5's rig. As we were going, I'm looking to see the rigs. I know we normally come down West Street. I want to find my rig, get tools, and then maybe I can trace my way in from there.

It turns out we found Squad 18 under the north pedestrian or somewhere around there, and we got masks. We took masks off of there. We were looking for tools. All we got was a couple of masks.

Just north of that pedestrian bridge before Vesey, we found Ladder 5. It was parked in the middle of the highway, right up against the divider.

Q. Can you mark that on the map, where it was parked?

A. 5 Truck was right here.

Q. Just write "5 Truck."

A. That's where it was when we got there.

The tormenters weren't down.

Q. Put "05" or something like that right next to it.

A. It was just parked. It was running. But the tormenters weren't down. It wasn't close enough to ladder the building.

As we're looking through the rig to try to get a Halligan or some tools, some construction workers or I don't know if they were civilians. They were employees I think somewhere down there, and they came running over to us saying there's a chief that needs to get down. There was a chief up on the mezzanine area right on the corner of Vesey and West.

I got in the truck. I pulled the tiller wheel in position so that all Joe had to do was sit up there and hold that wheel. I was going to back Ladder 5 close enough to this mezzanine area so that we could put up the aerial ladder to get him down and whoever else he had up there.

We did that. We backed it up. We got it close enough. We laddered the building. We put the aerial up, and that's it. Basically that's it.

Q. Who was the chief there?

A. I didn't get his name.

Q. When you got there he was still there?

A. He was still up there. I don't know if he came down our aerial or what. That was right about when the first building came down. We put the aerial up.

Q. Could you put on there where you moved it to? Was it pretty close to where it was originally?

A. We moved it this way, right there.

Q. So basically just as you got it in place, that's when the building started coming down?

A. We got it in place, and then we got off the turntable. We were looking for tools again. Then all of a sudden you heard something, and it sounded like a harrier jet was landing right over top of us. Sure enough that second tower was just coming straight down.

It was sick. I didn't think I was going to survive. It was really a sick sight and a really sick sound.

Q. What did you do?

A. I said, "Let's go, Joe. We're going to dive under this engine there." There was an engine, I think it was at Vesey and West, I think it was right on the corner by the median, and we ran to it and we dove underneath it. We ran to it, ran around it and dove underneath it, because we figured we were going to get covered and that's our best chance.

Although debris fell around us, the main structure felt as if -- we were lucky. When it sounded like the explosion stopped, the steel hitting, when it all seemed to stop, this just like a fire storm of wind and material, a sandstorm kind of, just came and wailed by, really flew past us quick.

We huddled and stayed in place, and we threw our masks on. I knew which way was north, so we started walking north to try to get out of that storm. Eventually it cleared. It was probably 20 minutes. It's hard to say, because it seems like to me that all of the time frames, how many minutes it took me to get there, I couldn't tell you. It's just like everything is just one. Your mind is playing games.

Q. Most people have the same problem.

A. I would like to ask you guys questions, you know, the times of what happened, piece my life together.

Together Joe and I walked north on West Street, and we found an engine company, hooked it up to a hydrant, and we fired the stag to try to knock down some of the smoke just so that we could see. We did that for a short time.

Q. Was there a lot of burning debris around or anything?

A. Not that we were able to hit. But there was a parking lot I think on the corner of Vesey. I'm not sure. I think it was the corner of Vesey and West. I'm pretty sure, yeah. On the southwest corner of Vesey and West, there was a parking lot that was just roaring. Every car was transmitting to the next car. This was between the two collapses, I think.

I went over there. I took a saw off of some fire truck, some ladder company -- I don't know -- and took a metal-cutting blade. There were two fences between the highway and this parking lot. I cut the fences and, with an

engine company, advanced the line and started knocking down those fires.

Once that line was in place, that engine was in control, they didn't need me. So that's when I started making my way back down to try to get inside the rubble.

Q. Did you get any direction from anybody at all or were you kind of like working on your own? Did you meet with any chiefs or lieutenants?

A. I saw chiefs. Yeah, I ran into chiefs, and they were all telling me to get lost: "You ought to just go north." But I didn't really want to do that because I know my guys are in there.

I left the saw there. I left that engine company. I figured they don't need me to put these cars out. I started walking back towards the towers. Then, bam, the next one started coming down. I just couldn't believe it.

Q. Where were you when the next one started coming down? How far away were you?

A. I think I was north of Vesey. I might have been closer to -- between Vesey and Barclay

on West Street.

Q. You were by yourself at this point?

A. I had Joe with me. We had lost each other and then got back together, I think. Your mind plays games with you when you see this kind of shit. I know we were together when the second one fell also. After that one came down, we walked north again.

We met up with an engine company. They were just staying by a hydrant and spraying the water, trying to knock the smoke down. They were just going to stay there. We hung out with them for a minute.

Then, I don't know, that's when I lost Joe, after the two towers were down. I knew he wasn't in the collapse. Somehow in the dark we lost each other. I headed back down -- well, that's it. That's all you want to know, the two towers.

Q. Well, you can go on a little bit.

A. I came back down, and I went to five, and it was crushed with steel and all kinds of crap. I didn't see anybody in it or under it or around it. So I started making my way towards

the pedestrian bridge, and I saw that the bridge had come down substantially. But there was about four feet -- there was a void underneath the pedestrian bridge where you could see the street. So I climbed under. I went under and went into the pile and started looking for guys and everything. There was just nothing to find. Everything was the same color.

That's all you guys want to know;
right?

Q. You covered it all. Anything else you want to add?

A. That's it.

MR. CASTORINA: The time is 12:50.

This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110018

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MARCEL CLAES

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

MR. CASTORINA: The date is October 9, 2001.
The time is 11:47. I'm Ron Castorina. I'm at
Engine 24, interviewing -- your name, sir?

FIREFIGHTER CLAES: Marcel Claes, firefighter
1st Grade, Engine 24.

MR. CASTORINA: And your name.

MR. MC COURT: Also present is Tom McCourt.

Q. And on September 11, 2001, can you tell me
what your assignment was that day?

A. My original assignment was in Ladder 5. I
had a mutual with Paul Keating, but the engine was
short that day, so they -- it was common practice to go
back into the engine, being I'm an engine man.

So the call came in, and we got on the rig.
We responded going south on Varick Street, and I said
to the nozzle man when I saw the damage, "That's got to
be an explosion," not realizing that it was hit by a
plane.

We pulled up to -- I believe we went down
Canal Street and went along West Street south, and we
ended up parked on West and Vesey Street. There was a
sprinkler system, a siamese for the sprinkler right
there.

We went to the lobby of 1 World Trade, and

Claes

when we got in there, we saw a lot of damage in the lobby around the elevator banks, and we found -- I found out that it was hit by a plane, thinking it was an accident.

So we proceeded up with other engine companies and truck companies in Stairwell A. After a dozen floors or so, we started to take breaks every four floors. We didn't realize it was hit by -- we didn't realize 2 World Trade was hit by an airplane, so we kept going up. It was single file, civilians going down and firemen going up.

The civilians were orderly and blessing us and helping the injured down. I checked the standpipe a few times on the way up. We made it up to the -- I believe the 35th story. We were taking a breather. I was on my knees, catching my breath, and we were discussing -- we were going to hook up with another engine company to make it up there -- easier to get up there. We were going to have some guys just take cylinders and the other guys take hoses, but we felt this rumble and this noise, like a train was going through your living room. Felt like an earthquake.

A few minutes later, a chief -- someone told me he believed it was 11 battalion -- said to drop

Claes

everything and get out, get out. He didn't say why. He just said, "Drop everything and get out." Probably said it a couple of times.

So basically, that's what guys did. I went back and got my coat, my cylinder and my standpipe kit, and I was the last one to go down from my company, but they ended up -- we got separated because I found out later that one of our -- Richard Billy was on the 27th story in the hallway with a woman in, I believe, a wheelchair, and the rest of the company went in to get him.

I continued down, not realizing that they stopped at the 27th Floor. I made my way down to around the 10th Floor. Someone said go to Stairway B, so I went down. I went to B. I saw Faust with Battalion 8. I asked him did he see anybody from 24 engine. He said no. I continued down.

I made it to the lobby. I did see a woman walking real slow. I walked behind them. She was being helped. I don't remember if it was a fireman or EMT. I got -- I just wanted to get some fresh air, so I went around them. I made it to the lobby.

I saw building employees running around. There was a lot of debris in the lobby. I went out the

Claes

same way I came in. That was on the northwest corner of tower -- 1 World Trade.

Q. On the map on there?

A. I went out a window that was taken out, because I knew my engine was parked on that side. I made it out to the -- I saw a man in the courtyard. He was waving me out, like come on out, get out of there. I didn't look up. I just went out to the street.

When I got out to the street, I looked up, not believing what I was looking at. I saw three people jump out of the building, and it started to collapse, and I took off north on West Street. I made it behind an engine. I was only carrying my coat. I had time to put it over my head. I was at the back step with another fireman. I don't know who it was.

Finally when the dust cleared, I started walking north on West Street for a couple of blocks. I didn't see the rest of my company. I saw some members from Ladder 8, and I decided to go back to the engine, because it was still running when I went out the first time, so when I went back to Engine 24, which was parked on the Vesey and West, it was still running, but the supply line was severed and there was a lot of dust and debris on the ground.

Claes

It was -- I believe Engine 239 was a couple of blocks north on West Street, who were originally supplying 24 engine. They --

Q. Can you mark on the map where you believe Engine 239 was?

A. I'm only guessing that they were up the block.

Q. Where was the chauffeur from 24? He was still at the rig or he --

A. I didn't see the chauffeur. I don't know what happened to anybody. That's why I went back to the engine, hoping that I'd find somebody from my company.

I got no response on the radio. I found out later they went to the hospital, and I didn't -- I didn't know where the chauffeur was, so I went back to 24 engine. I went back to the engine. It was still running, still hooked up to the Siamese.

Firemen were taking hand lines off, so I had to boost the tank. They were looking for people, and they needed precautionary lines. Actually, it was over here, 24 engine. I stayed with the engine, 239. I believe -- yeah, it was an officer, I think, from 239, and his men that were -- he supplied me -- it took

Claes

awhile, but we found the first lengths. At one point, we were putting out ground fire with the first lengths.

There wasn't much pressure, because when I did get resupplied finally, I hooked up to a tower ladder, I believe 12, that was parked or maybe they moved it, Ladder 12. They operated up Vesey Street because a lot of rubble over there and ground fire, you know, going over here.

It was like ground fire and rubble that was on fire, so I just stayed right at the engine hoping somebody would show up from the company, at least they'd find me, but I just felt I had to do something, so I -- you know, I made sure that those hand lines and -- you know, I was -- I felt I was being useful just by manning the pumps.

At one point, a rescue company came by, and they walked into the -- you know, this is after the collapses. I they walked in. I guess they did their thing. I guess they were -- actually I don't know what they were doing. They must have got off. You know, they were off that day and went back to the company to gear up and made it there on their own.

Q. How was your breathing with all the dust and

Claes

the debris?

A. Oh, at the -- after the collapse, I was gagging behind the engine, and there was -- my throat was caked up with this stuff. I almost threw up. Couldn't see the hand in front of my face.

Eventually the dust cleared. That's -- and after that, I picked up my cylinder and my coat and went up West Street, north on West Street, but then I came back after my eyes were all itchy.

Q. Smoke got cleared a little bit when you went back?

A. Yeah. After the dust cleared, I went back and operated the engine. I wasn't in any condition to climb through the rubble, but I felt, you know, I was being useful at manning the engine.

Q. Right.

A. Because of the ground fire. They ended up taking a multiversile tower ladder and two hand lines. I believe the hand lines were mostly because there was guys operating, searching over the terrace.

Let me see. There is like a terrace there and then the building. This building ended up -- there was a lot of rubble over here, of course. I guess that's between 8 World Trade and 1 World Trade that was

Claes

on fire. This building -- I was watching the fire, started in this corner.

Q. Which building was that?

A. 8 World Trade, U.S. Customs building, and I guess about six stories, and it was on the 5th Floor, and then it just went from south to north in the course of the day. All morning I was watching 7 World Trade burn, which we couldn't do anything about because it was so much chaos looking for missing members.

Q. Did you end up going to the hospital or were you injured in any way or --

A. Yeah. When I was running, some hot stuff went down by back, because I didn't have time to put my coat back on, and I had some -- well, I guess between first and second degree burns on my back, ended up in the crack of my ass, and that's where the worst -- the worst ones turned out to be, because I was covering myself, and I couldn't -- it finally settled.

Q. Went down to your back?

A. Yeah, in my bunker pants.

Q. Did you get any first-aid?

A. I did. About four o'clock -- no, actually, I got some first-aid by some EMTs that were parked, I think on Vesey -- yeah, at the intersection of Vesey

Claes

and West I got some first-aid.

Q. This was how much after?

A. A few hours afterwards. A few hours afterwards, because I was going to get to some water. I ran out of cigarettes. I was hoping to grub a cigarette.

Q. I'm with you.

A. All right. So I did get some first-aid earlier in the day, but finally after 3:30, quarter to four, I was feeling nauseous, and I wasn't sure why.

I thought maybe the burns were affecting me somehow, so I ended up going to the triage at Stuyvesant High School, and I found -- I was looking for the command post, and there were a lot of firemen, I guess who came after the fact.

I got to triage. They put some cream on my burns and flushed out my eyes for the first time, and I -- like my eyes -- I mean, I had great glasses to read, but I used to be able to read the paper with good light, but I couldn't even do that for a couple of weeks. They finally got better.

And then I sat around. I found out the rest of the guys were okay. They went to the hospital. I saw the chauffeur there. That was at Stuyvesant High

Claes

School. Well, actually it was on West Street right outside Stuyvesant High School. They thought -- they were relieved, because they thought I was missing.

I did see members that came after the fact that were -- you know, but they weren't from the company. They came from home, but I guess they stayed looking for members that were missing and never went back to where the triage was by Stuyvesant High School.

What else? So by six o'clock I decided let me go home. I called my wife finally, because the phones weren't working around ground zero, so I found someone with a phone at four o'clock. I called home, and she was relieved, and I sat around there to rest, and I walked to the firehouse, and I made it to Canal Street, and I saw another fireman, a messenger I believe he was, and he drove me to the firehouse, and I took a shower and talked to the guys for awhile, and I was hoping they would find guys from Ladder 8 -- Ladder 5, rather, and that's that.

The next day I came back just to see what was going on. I was in no condition to go back there. And I worked Thursday. I was -- it was 24 on, 24 off. So I came in Thursday morning, and we didn't even have a

Claes

fire truck until earlier that afternoon.

The shops did a great job fixing it up. It was missing gauges, the gauges on the pump, and the windshield was broken, and cabinet doors were bent. It was missing a lot of hose and tools. So we got it back that afternoon. We cleaned it up Thursday afternoon.

I believe they took it to the Sanitation Department, and they power washed it, and we got it back here. We had to hose the inside out, and we stocked it with whatever we had in the tool shed, and we went back in service around six o'clock that night.

We didn't have many runs, but I think that was the only operating engine covering lower Manhattan, except for the one that was operating within the collapse zone, the ground zero.

We did go back Thursday night. Was it Thursday? I think yeah, we did go back. It was our turn to go back to ground zero, and all I did was fill buckets with dust and debris. It rained that night, so we went back to the -- after a number of hours, we went back to the firehouse.

I was up all night, and Friday morning I went to the medical office, and they gave me a prescription for antibiotics, told me to keep -- it was starting to

Claes

get infected, my burns, so they told me -- they put me light duty.

So Saturday I came back to the firehouse, and I was due to work at my light-duty position at Rac 5 Sunday morning. I went home -- when I got home Monday morning, we started with wakes and funerals all that week, because they did recover guys from Ladder 5, so we were off.

Basically, I didn't come back to the firehouse until the following week. The following week after Greg Sausito's memorial Mass, and then we were on -- when I was scheduled to come back to work. They went back to the regular schedule.

And that's about it.

MR. CASTORINA: The time concludes this interview is 12:05.

File No. 9110020

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN MURRAY

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

K. Murray

MR. MURAD/CUNDARI: Today is October 9, 2001. The time is 1240 hours and my name is Murray Murad/George Cundari of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

A. Firefighter, Third Grade, Kevin Murray, assigned to ladder 18 that day of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I am currently at Ladder 11 and Engine 28 regarding the events on September 11, 2001. Firefighter Murray, do you want to give your account of the tragic day?

A. Okay. I'll start from the beginning. I came to Ladder 11. I was -- I knew I was being detailed to 18 Truck and I thought I was riding for somebody on 11 Truck when the first plane hit. The second alarm was given, 28 Engine was turned out and I had somebody relieve me on 11 Truck so I could get over to 18 Truck in case they went on the box. I got over to 18 Truck. I was assigned by Lieutenant Borega, I was assigned the can and shortly after that the fifth alarm was given for the first tower and we went to -- 18 Truck was assigned. That's just about the same time that the second plane had

K. Murray
hit, because we still saw kind of the explosion when we got onto the FDR, because they're pretty close.

On the FDR, there is a lot of traffic on the FDR and we saw -- I don't know which tower it was, but I think it was Tower 2, what looked like a hole where the fire was. That looked like a plane had gone through it.

Q. So that would probably be the south tower?

A. Probably the south tower, right, because we were coming from the FDR. So the south tower is closer. So probably the south tower. We saw -- I couldn't believe what I was looking at. We got under the bridge that goes from the FDR into West Street and there was -- it was unbelievable. There was jumpers everywhere, there was bodies everywhere, pieces of plane everywhere. It didn't seem like a lot of firemen everywhere. There was rigs parked in a couple of different areas, but you didn't see a lot of firemen, at all.

Q. Would you happen to know basically or to the best of your knowledge, where you saw those rigs?

A. There was a couple of rigs parked in front of the north tower and a couple of rigs parked --

K. Murray

there was a bridge that comes across where Liberty Street is and there was a van fire right next to that. I remember seeing that when I came in. And I saw a couple of rigs parked on Liberty Street. Where we parked, our rig was on -- we parked our rig under the bridge, the pedestrian bridge of -- that comes from 1 World Trade across the street to the Financial Center, the pedestrian bridge. That's where we parked our rig under.

Q. Were you able to identify any of the other apparatus or units that were there?

A. That were there?

Q. If you recall.

A. The rigs that we saw?

Q. Right.

A. No. Not to my knowledge. There was a company that was pulled in right next to us. I'm not sure what that company was.

Q. Okay.

A. Now we're all just looking up. The first thing the Lieutenant said is "We're staying together on this." I said, "Lieu, I'm grabbing a search rope." I grabbed a search rope, we all grabbed an extra cylinder and we started heading across under

K. Murray

the bridge towards the first tower, Tower 1, the north tower. So we had walked alongside of 6 World Trade. We're parked under here. 18 Truck was parked on this side of the street, right there. We walked under the bridge and then pretty much walked into 1 World Trade right on this corner. Tower 1, that's how I went into the building (indicating).

There was a bunch of glass broken and we didn't go in through a doorway. There was all glass broken, there was glass everywhere and there was bodies everywhere. Everywhere that you looked there was a body or mush, you know. We got into -- the command center was somewhere in here or there was a bunch of chiefs somewhere in here (indicating). When we got in there, there was a lot of people not knowing what to do. Van Essen was there. Van Essen came over to 18 Truck.

Q. This is the north tower; correct?

A. North tower. Van Essen came over to the 18 Truck as soon as we got into the building or shortly thereafter and said, "Forget about the fire. Just get the people out." That's what they actually told us and these people -- we're waiting to get a sign basically.

K. Murray

So we stood over here on the northern most wall, the exposure 4 wall -- the exposure 2 wall and waited to get a sign. 21 Engine was doing the same thing, standing there with us and we were waiting to get a sign. I actually helped Father Judge into the building, because he went under one of those -- where the glass was, they had these metal bars going across and he had to bend over and walk under it. So I helped him into the building and then they said, we're going to be sent to the third floor and above. To start working our way up to start doing the search.

Now my father works in the building and I'm looking for a directory to see where he worked and we went to -- the first floor we went to was the third floor and all these people were coming down in the rear of the tower back here. They have these escalators that were shut off and all these people were coming down.

The elevators looked like they were on fire in the lobby. There wasn't smoke coming out of them, but it looked like they all bubbled up and everything and there was a fire in there. Basically we took the B stairwell, which is in between the

K. Murray

elevators. I'm sorry. We forced an elevator door first and we got an lady out of an elevator. The elevator in the B stair, next to the B stairwell, closest to the B stairwell. We helped a lady out of there and we started walking up to the third floor. That third floor was clear. There was no damage, nothing. We got up to the fifth floor and there was severe damage. The ceilings had come down, the some walls had caved in. Major sprinkler damage, because there wasn't just a sprinkler. It was just like 2 and a half inch hose hitting you in the face when you were walking up there. So we were walking. We figured this is a good place to start looking for people and we were in some sort of -- we didn't see a company name or anything. Like we were in some sort of corporate area with cubicles or anything. It was almost like we were in like a locker room or something. We had made our way to like where the janitors worked or something. We had checked all the locker rooms and everything else. We were forcing some doors. We were there for a while.

Then we went to the sixth floor and did the same thing. Same sort of damage up there. When we were on the sixth floor, it was the sixth floor or

K. Murray
the fifth floor, we were helping the people get down the B stairwell. And what I found out later to be was the first tower had collapsed.

Q. The south tower?

A. The south tower had collapsed. Now, it shook us and knocked a couple of guys down. Everybody ran to the stairwell. All the lights went off, all the shit came up the stairwell. It was filled with dust. There was a report that a third plane had hit the building and then we got another report that the 65 floor in the north tower had collapsed. That's what the rumbling was. We had no idea that the south tower had gone.

So at that point we --

Q. Did you get a report from the radio? Any communications? How was the communications at that point?

A. Communications were all over the place. I had the can so I didn't have a radio, but I was with the irons man and I kinds of heard a lot, but a lot of people were trying to talk at the same time. It was just static, a lot. What you did hear was -- what I did hear at one point, which I thought was Ladder 11, but it wound up being Battalion 11,

K. Murray
because I was listening for them, was on the 30th floor. But it wasn't Ladder 11. It was Battalion 11.

We basically did an evacuation at that point and we started trying to get the people to keep going down the stairs, to calm down. What happened was that we didn't see it, but a portion of the lobby had gotten knocked out when that tower came down, so we couldn't evacuate people down that stairwell anymore. So we started funneling everybody that was on the stairwell through the 5th floor, across the 5th floor through the locker room, to another stairwell. I think it's the C stairwell. I'm not sure. And we started sending people down that.

Eventually someone -- and we were basically set up on a relay where it would be a couple of us every 15, 20 feet with flashlights showing people where to walk and we sent the people down that stairwell. Whatever was blocking the B stairwell must have got freed up, because then we were able to -- we were able to start sending them back down that stairwell. Because people, it was taking forever to get these people through the 5th floor.

K. Murray

Q. And were all you guys still together at the same time or were you separated?

A. We were spread out on the 5th floor, but we were all together. We were all there.

Q. Okay were you also on channel 1?

A. Yes. We were always on channel 1.

Q. At any time did they advise you to switch to another channel?

A. I heard something about somebody being in a different tower or something, switch to channel 3. But I didn't have a radio, so I didn't really think about that.

Q. When you were in the second collapse, of the north tower, do you recall the individuals or the companies that were with you?

A. 28 Engine was with us when we left the building. They weren't with us on the floor when we came down. After that, after we got everybody out, it was all firemen in the stairwells, in the B stairwell and I saw a guy from 16 Engine that I knew on the stairwell. We kind of waved to each other. I saw a guy from 15 Engine in the stairwell.

Q. Do you recall any of their names by chance?

K. Murray

A. Yes. Jimmy Hynes from 15 Engine, I saw him in the stairwell. He's okay. Pete Fallucca from 16 Engine, I saw him. He's okay. And this is all in the stairwell coming down. We went down to the lobby. Because once the firemen were all evacuating, we decided to evacuate with them. We went down to the lobby, this is the first time I got to see the lobby. We were missing Charlie Maloney from 18 Truck. We didn't know where he was. I think he was the irons with me that day. Because he had gone down to the front of the stairwell to guide civilians out the stairwell. When we got to the lobby and saw so the lobby was devastated, we thought maybe he got killed in that. But he wound up being okay later on.

What happened was we got down to the lobby and a guy from Rescue 1, I don't know his name, came over to 18 Truck and said, "You gotta help us if you got any steam left." He was all bloodied up. He goes, "My company is trapped upstairs and we got more companies trapped upstairs." He goes, "If you got anything left, come with me."

We run up the stairs. We started going back up. Now all these firemen are evacuating the

K. Murray

building, we start going back up the B stairwell.

We made it to the 5th floor and then there was a report of major gas, a gas leak on the 5th floor.

So now I'm heading back up the stairs to the 20 something floor and there was some sort of gas leak on the 5th floor. I smelled it, but I couldn't tell if it was a gas leak or anything, but you definitely smelled something that wasn't there when we were doing the evacuation.

Q. Was there any conversation when you guys were going back up and there were firefighters descending down? Was there any conversation between the two groups?

A. More so through Lieutenants, but, you know, just basically. "Be safe." No one said anything about the tower having gone down. I don't think a lot of people knew that it had gone down. We didn't know.

So when we got up to the 5th floor and we smelled that gas and we saw these guys evacuating, we said, "We better get out of here." So we started heading down again. The guy from Rescue kept going up. He didn't stay with us. I don't know his name. A short, stocky guy.

K. Murray

Q. Was the stairwell lit?

A. We removed an injured civilian at the beginning and a couple of hundred civilians through. You know, getting them through that stairwell. But other than that, we didn't carry anybody out. The civilians were kind of -- once the collapse happened, they were shot. But they weren't panicking, running or anything like that. They were kind of staying calm.

Q. Given the current known status of the missing, the injured, deceased members, who did you see and where did you see them and what were they doing at the time? Was there any verbal interaction? Like I asked before when you guys were up and down the staircase. Did you last see someone?

A. When we came down to the lobby, we saw 28 Engine. We also saw 4 Engine. 4 Engine was in the lobby with us. There was another company that was back -- I don't know what company it was. It was back by the escalators, walking towards the front of the lobby. I think it was an Engine Company. I'm not sure.

We had a guy from 28 Engine, Roy Chelsen, had

K. Murray

said, We saw all these jumpers coming down, a lot of glass was coming down, said we should run.

Lieutenant Becker and Roy, who is a senior man said, "Let's run." They ran out Tower 1, alongside World Trade 6 and we had said -- 18 Truck conferred too and said, "We should go too." But the thing we were scared about was that the jumpers were coming down and all the glass was coming down. There was a lot more jumpers coming down at that time. And there was a guy under the bridge screaming, "Come on. Come on. Come on." You know. We ran. A couple of jumpers just missed me and the roof man.

We got under the bridge and we stopped, because my hook got caught in Harry's suspenders and his radio. It took me forever to get my hook out of his thing. We thought we were safe at that point. We saw a guy, I think big Port Authority Police or somebody had a guy locked up in handcuffs right in front of us and there was a guy, a rig right there.

Q. You can use the diagram to show us.

A. There was a rig right here. Actually, even closer. It was right as soon you got onto the street. There was a rig and a couple of guys sitting on the back of the rig.

K. Murray

Q. At West and Vesey?

A. Yeah. Right in front of World Trade, right under the bridge. And they were all messed up. You know, like exhausted and they were sitting there. We walked -- now we're walking. This guy, they were locking up this guy a little bit from Vesey, right here. A little bit south of Vesey Street on west. We started walking when the second tower --

Q. They are describing it as the north tower.

A. The north tower came down.

Q. Where did you exit out of?

A. The same place --

Q. The same way you went in? Okay. You went north on West Street?

A. We went north on West Street. We decided not to go to our rig, because we saw a lot of people up here, so we started going towards them. When the tower started -- there was a big explosion that I heard and someone screamed that it was coming down and I looked away and I saw all the windows domino -- you know, dominoeing up and then come down. We were right in front of 6, so we started running and how are you going to outrun the World

K. Murray

Trade Center? So we threw our tools and I dove under a rig. The chauffeur Hughey from 18 Truck dove with me. The rest of 18 Truck dove under something else. Not the same rig as us, and then it came down. I don't even think we made it to Vesey Street. We might have been right on the corner of Vesey Street.

Q. And were the guys from 18 safe and accounted for?

A. Well, not at that point, but eventually through the day we found Charlie Maloney who we thought was killed in the lobby. He had made it out himself across to the Financial Center, across the street, and the roof man, Ralph from 18 Truck had gotten hurt and he was found at 7 Engine and 1 Truck later on. About seven hours later.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. No.

MR. MURAD/CUNDARI: Okay. So basically this concludes our interview. I would like to thank you, Firefighter Kevin Murray, for this interview which you just gave us.

The time now is 1300 hours and at this time I would like to conclude this

K. Murray
interview. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110021

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MATTHEW LONG

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

M. Long

MR. MURAD: The date is October 9, 2001.

The time is 1425 hours and this is Murray

Murad and --

MR. CUNDARI: George Cundari.

MR. MURAD: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following firefighter:

A. Matthew Long. Firefighter first rank, Ladder 43.

MR. MURAD: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We are currently at Ladder 43 and this is regarding the tragic events on September 11, 2001.

BY MR. MURAD:

Q. If you would please give your accounts of that day, on that tragic day what happened at the World Trade Center regarding your ladder company and personally yourself.

A. Okay. We were at a box. That's when the seconds plane hit and then we took in the Trade Center incident. We came in on West Street and to the best of my knowledge I could see both towers on fire, a lot of smoke. I witnessed people jumping as we were driving down the West Street highway.

M. Long

Q. If you could draw on the diagram of where your resting place was.

A. I believe we stopped somewhere on Murray Street, almost two blocks from the 6 World Trade and another block from the first tower. At that moment we got off the rig, we got all our equipment together and I started walking towards the command post. We took a minute. Our lieutenant, Glenn Rohan, took a minute, stopped us all and basically gave us a little pep talk. We didn't know what we were getting into here. It was obviously some kind of an attack and that we should conserve energy, get rid of some tools and stay together most of all.

So we started back down West Street towards the Trade Center and I would say we got to between Barclay and Vesey when the first tower came down and it was chaos. It was crazy.

Q. Were all you guys from the truck together at the time that collapse came?

A. We were all together at the time with one extra roof man.

Q. That was the south tower that you're talking about?

A. I believe, yes. I believe it was the

M. Long

first tower. I believe when we were coming down the West Side Highway the both towers were still standing and burning and there was no chaos going on at that point.

So we retreated a little bit I guess, right to about Barclay and we ducked in, possibly, I don't remember, but we possibly ducked in 125 Barclay. We ducked in like an entranceway and just lay on the floor while most of the stuff was blowing by us. And when it seemed to have -- when the cloud of gray and black crap and things going by just seemed to slow down, we tied off a rope and started walking in to go back towards where everything used to be.

Q. You came down West Street from there?

A. Yes. We came down this way, like that (indicating).

Q. Just circle this here and identify this as 125 Barclay. That's where you waited until the debris and everything cleared?

A. Yes.

Q. Was there any communications by radio or was there still command post communications post --

A. At this point it was just -- there was just people running past us and so much chaos. We

M. Long
masked up and we started walking in with a rope. We had a search rope on and at that point I didn't know where we were headed.

Q. Were any other firefighters running you way or did you intercept anybody?

A. There were some cops running our way. There were -- there could have been firemen running, but there were fire trucks everywhere and when we got in further, there was just fire, a lot of rigs on fire.

Q. Were you able to identify the rigs that were on fire, by any chance?

A. No, I didn't recall which rigs were there at that point. But at that point we stretched in. We started climbing over the rubble and the boss said --

Q. What boss was that?

A. Lieutenant Rohan, Glenn Rohan, 43. He was just telling us to get -- he took three guys and said, "Grab a line off that rig and start putting out some of these car fires and rig fires." As he tried to look to see if there was still a command post. So that's what we did. So he split us up into two teams. And that's what we did probably for

M. Long

a while and I don't even remember the second tower coming down. We just kept working and climbing over stuff. I don't remember it coming down. I don't know if it came my direction or it went in the other direction, because it was just black. It had to be -- visibility was horrible for at least 45, 50, 60 minutes. I don't remember the time at that point.

So that's what we kept doing. We kept stretching hose lines. There was a ladder to -- there was a portable ladder up on 6 World Trade, so we were in this area right here just climbing over all sorts of debris. It was crush -- I think Rescue 1 was right about here.

Q. You are identifying the West Side Highway, right off Vesey; right?

A. It was in near Vesey. It was inside of -- it was between 6 and 1 and that's where the foot bridge I believe is.

Q. So that's the pedestrian bridge?

A. That's the pedestrian bridge. So it was right in front of 6.

Q. Okay. So that was Rescue 1.

A. Rescue 1 was right around here. I

M. Long
remember that. And this was down. So this is where we operated from the most, for the first hour, right here. Vesey and West Street. There were rigs everywhere. Rigs were all over here, they were burning. Between Barclay and Vesey there had to be a dozen rigs burning.

Q. At any point did you remove any civilians or a member of the service following any of the collapses? If so, were there any injuries or did you see any firefighters that were injured?

A. No. I didn't encounter any injured firefighters. I didn't leave anyone alone. If I saw them alone, I checked to make sure they were all right. If they weren't, I was looking for their company or looking for their boss.

Q. Were people still running towards you or running away at that point?

A. No. At this point now when we were putting out fires everyone was, you know, was pretty much just scrambling for hose line and doing stuff like that. Then, like I said, the boss went up a ladder that was to the scaffold of 6 World Trade here, where the U.S. Customs building is. He yelled down he needed two stokes, because they had a down

M. Long

fireman up here.

So we went and grabbed two baskets, tied them up and they carried him up the land. At that point is when they were looking for 6 Truck. 6 Truck and 39 Engine, they were saying were missing over the radios?

Q. I don't remember.

A. 6 Truck and 39 were together and they were trapped and they were calling for help on the radio. That's the last radio transmission I heard on channel 1. My boss and Jerry Suden and Todd Frederickson, two firefighters, and Johnny Colon, he was the chauffeur that day. The four of them went through this building and into the rubble of the both towers.

Q. The both towers were down at that point?

A. Yes. Both towers were definitely down at that point. So they went in there and that's the last I heard from them. They switched to channel 5. I didn't hear it given over the radio, for the 43 truck to switch to 5, so I operated with Frank Macchia. He was the second roof man and we teamed up in 6 World Trade with the 40th battalion. And we searched this building top to bottom. That's the 6

M. Long
World Trade, U.S. Customs building.

Q. Right.

A. So we searched that building top to bottom and just constantly getting dead ends.

Q. At what point do you think you guys hooked up all together as a company? Was that at any point or not at all?

A. I didn't hook back up with the rest of my company until 5:00 or 6:00 o'clock at night. So I operated alone a lot.

Q. Okay. Anything to add?

A. The 7 came down at 4:30, I believe?

Q. Yeah, around that time.

A. Okay. Then I'm wrong. If 7 came down between 4:30 and 5:00, I hooked up with my company. Frank Macchia and I went under this foot bridge and started climbing on top of the rubble. At that point there was like a chain gang of guys and we were trying to get one of the Chiefs that was trapped, they were trying to get closer to him.

Q. Let's highlight that area.

A. Okay. We came under the foot bridge this way and we probably would be on top or in this little courtyard between 1 and 2.

M. Long

Q. Okay. And this is where --

A. 1 and 2 here. And there was a rubble here. There was like a big 40, 50-foot drop you had to walk down and then back up and we had a little bit of a chain gang trying to pass stuff out and they were supposedly in communication with one Chief and I was probably midway up with Frank Macchia and my boss and Jerry and whoever else was up on top of that rubble. So I waited there and that's when we finally got reunited. And at that point they were worried that 7 was coming down so they were calling for everyone to back out.

So I waited for -- we waited for the boss, Lieutenant Rohan, in the middle of the rubble and we all walked out together back to the West Side Highway and crossed the highway and pretty much hung out by the marina when 7 came down.

Q. Where were you during the first collapse?

A. Walking down West Street. We were walking to the command center.

Q. And then you heard the second collapse, you said; right?

A. I don't remember the second collapse at all. I guess it was just stuff going through my

M. Long
head and whatever else. I'm almost 100% positive -- actually I had a camera on the rig when we were driving on the West Side Highway, I took pictures, but they didn't come out and I can remember both towers burning and we could see people jumping. From then on our minds were just like you didn't know what was going on. Unimaginable.

Q. A lot of talk on the radios or --

A. A tremendous amount of talk on the radios.

Q. Were you able to understand?

A. I mean there was a lot of people yelling. "We're trapped here." "We need tools here." "We need tools here." And nothing was getting answered because rigs were -- there were rig fires and police vehicle fires. They said the ESU units were on fire and they had explosives and weapons. So that was the concern. The amount of stuff that was flying in the air. It wasn't even like smoke. It was like dust or whatever it was. It was just lingering and it stayed there for such a long time. Which led me to believe that the second building collapsed and, you know, they just kept it going.

I mean that's my story pretty much. I mean it was a long time. I was by myself a long time. I

M. Long
didn't try to call them for a while because there was other stuff on the radio and I was all right.

Q. You had nobody with you?

A. I was with one other firefighter, Frank Macchia. The two of us worked.

Q. You were together the whole time?

A. We stayed together after we left the 48th battalion. We worked in that building for a while and the building was totally evacuated. We didn't see anybody and there was some pockets of fire, you know, big holes in it, but we were -- we eventually left him to try to reunite ourselves with our guys.

Q. And you finally found them over where?

A. We found them through this foot bridge, probably right in this area here of the rubble, the center of the rubble. We went through the foot bridge and came up and there were some I beams and there was a big wall. You kind of climbed down a bit and then came back up, and that is where our boss was operating up there, on top of that where they said they possibly had communications with a chief that was trapped. I'm assuming he was one that they left there. Because they were just adamant about 7 coming down immediately. I think we

M. Long
probably got out of that rubble and 18 minutes later
is when 7 came down. So I watched -- we watched.
There was a command station right here on Vesey. We
were here with a whole group of guys. We watched 7
come down and then we went through, I guess this is
the morgue now, Merrill Lynch, we went through that
building there and there was an atrium we came
through to go back on the other side and try to get
back in to help.

Q. So you came from North End street then?

A. Yes. We came right through. This is the
marina. We went right through -- there is an atrium
here and we came through here and there was another
command post on this side and we were trying to get
back in to see what they were doing. Lieutenant
Nigro from 58 Engine was missing and apparently they
knew where he was. We were trying to help out
there, but by then it was -- by darkness we were all
just spent. We were just hanging out.

MR. MURAD: Firefighter Matthew Long, I
would like to thank you for sitting down with
us for this interview. The time now is 1440
hours and this concludes this portion of the
interview.

File No. 9110022

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIRST GRADE FIREFIGHTER GERARD SUDEN

Interview Date: October 9, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

G. SUDEN

MR. MURAD: Today is October 9, 2001. The time is 1445 hours. I'm Murray Murad.

MR. CUNDARI: I'm George Cundari.

MR. MURAD: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter?

A. I'm Gerard Suden, Ladder 43.

Q. Rank and command?

A. First grade Firefighter.

Q. Your assigned command?

A. I'm assigned to 43 Truck.

Q. Okay.

A. Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. I'm currently at Ladder 43, Engine 53 and this is regarding the tragic events that occurred on September 11, 2001. Gerard, would you like to give an account of that day that you were working or assigned to Ladder 43 on September 11?

A. Sure. To the best of my knowledge I wasn't too familiar with that area before it happened, but from looking at this map, I will try and give you the best account I can.

MR. CUNDARI: Start from like when you came into work that morning or where you got the call,

G. SUDEN

where you were.

A. Like I was telling you guys, it was my first tour back to 43 Truck after a 90 day detail to 2 truck. As you know those guys are gone. That whole truck was wiped out. It was good to be back. I was cleaning the tools on the rig and the next thing I know, guys are yelling from the kitchen and I went in and we were watching it on TV.

It was kind of hard to believe, but what happened was the Engine, 53 Engine got sent down there pretty early on, like before the second plane hit they were en route and I believe from talking to them, they witnessed the plane hit. They were down there. I knew it was bad.

We wished them well when they went down and I think me and the other members of the truck, just the nature of the job, we were chomping at the bit to get down there ourselves. We wanted to help out. They were kind of pulling most of the companies from the area and we were getting the feeling that we weren't going to get to go because they pulled the company north of us and the company south of us.

We wound up getting at some point in the middle of -- wound up getting an EMS run on 42nd Street

G. SUDEN

which is way out of our district, but being that the city was so undermanned, they sent us all the way down there and as we were en route you could see the smoke and people watching it on the streets, executives smoking cigarettes and everybody was looking. We wanted to get there like I said.

We went to assist -- the EMS run was for a guy who had his foot stuck in a revolving door. I remember being a little annoyed, like I want to be down there. We got finished with that and we were pretty much asking the dispatcher to send us, let us help out, we are closer to the area. We weren't getting a response and shortly after we were en route back north towards here, home, we did wind up getting sent. We made way, headed down there --

Q. What was the radio communication at that time after you finished the EMS job, what was the transmissions going over the air?

A. From the back I couldn't hear too much of what was going on in the cab and I recall being at a light on the way north again and we knew, by now you figured out it was a terrorist attack. You see the two planes, and I remember scooters -- motors, one of the guys, a delivery messenger guy listening to a head

G. SUDEN

phone told us they just flew a plane into the Pentagon and that was kind of unbelievable. It was all real pretty surrealistic, but I remember confirming that with another driver, somebody driving a car was listening to his radio so then we were kind of -- believed it.

The radio communication, I'm going to tell you when we got down there I wasn't really clued into the fact that the first building was down and I found out later that that's what the situation was. When we got down there the first building had been down. When I found out later on that there was like 20 something minutes between the collapses, it's a pretty long time not to go with that information, but there was no communication. Not from the air anyway. I think -- we were 10-8. We had less ability to find this out. People that were watching it on TV knew, like I said, at home, but we were just on the air and trying to get down there.

Q. You can draw on that, by the way.

A. That's fine. I will just tell you.

MR. CUNDARI: Mark where you were.

Q. You went south on West Street?

A. We are coming down the West Side Highway and

G. SUDEN

some point, pretty good distance north we jumped out with a good view of the tower and I guess the south towers was down. It was buffered by the north tower, so we really couldn't tell. We just seen the smoke from behind it. We figured the building was there just burning, but looking at the north tower, walking down the block you could see the gaping hole and we were all pretty in awe of it.

We commandeered a bus, kind of stopped a bus because we were a good distance. We were a few blocks. I couldn't even tell you which street, maybe Warren or even further north from what I remember. We wanted to get there even quicker so we jumped on the bus and they dropped us somewhere -- I remember this pedestrian bridge, I remember walking south of that and I can't tell you how close we were but we ran back past that because as we were walking down, the building came down.

Q. That was the north building?

A. That was the north building, which for a while I was arguing with the guy that I wasn't convinced that the other building was down. Like I said I thought that was the first one. I thought somewhere in the midst of that whole noise maybe the

G. SUDEN

second one came down and I couldn't pinpoint when it was, but that was the case. That was the second one coming down.

Q. So you said you heard when you got there that the building came down but you weren't sure, someone said that the building --

A. No, I didn't really -- I wasn't sure at all. After talking about it later on, one of the guys -- a Lieutenant, said that they were debating it on the way in, saying to each other that I think that building is down. We were all talking to each other and talking about we are going to stick together. We knew it was a bad situation we were going into. We were going to be working a long time. I remember the Lieutenant telling us to take an extra minute also. Make sure you don't have any heavy clothing on under your bunker gear, we are going to be here a while.

We stripped down a little bit, so between the guy with his foot stuck in a revolving door and the Lieutenant giving us a good heads up on the way in, who is to say what kept us being there a minute sooner, but we were at a distance when the building came down. We were fortunate. I thought we were going to be sand blasted off the street by the looks of it. We all ran,

G. SUDEN

we were trying to break into a gate. We ran back north, we were trying to break into a gate and get further off the street.

When it passed us, the dust and debris, we were at a decent distance but the visibility was zero so we masked up. You couldn't see. We were starting to get back down the street. We knew people were going to need help. We masked up for a time.

I remember also, we used a rope for a little bit. That became pretty burdensome, you couldn't get far and you have to run back and untie it, but that's how low the visibility was. It started to lighten up. We went down, I guess, to right outside the north building and as we were walking down, all the cars were on fire on West Street, so I remember my Lieutenant telling me and another guy -- well, we all started working on this pumper. It was a Brooklyn pumper, it was a Brooklyn Engine, parked somewhere a little north, maybe to Vesey, maybe the corner of Vesey, but we pulled the line off of that and I remember him telling me stay on this line, me and another guy I was with, Mike Regan, that was working with us that day, we stayed together on the line and he took the rest of the crew. I can't tell you exactly what he did in the time

G. SUDEN

that we were putting out the car fires, but I remember -- the visibility -- putting out the car fires, it wasn't exactly what I am normally doing, working in a truck company, but all bets were off. He told us to stay with that line. It needed to be done.

We put out I believe it was Rescue 1. Some of the rigs, I mean there was rigs also. I can't even tell you how many car fires there was, but we are putting them out and you realize the visibility was getting somewhat better. I mean it needed to be done.

Q. You worked your way south on West Street?

A. Worked our way south putting out fires. We even went further south of tower one putting them out and coming back and we had a lot of help along from other guys, stretching the line and the debris in the street was just tough going over.

Q. People still running by you at that point?

A. Yes, stretchers are being carried out. Guys are on top of -- there was some scaffolding there on what building. I'm not sure. Maybe it was 6 World Trade Center. I thought it was just west of the tower. Maybe it was the lower portion. Like I said I wasn't that familiar with the area to begin with. There was stretchers coming out.

G. SUDEN

After putting out the car fires I was trying to find the Lieutenant again. The original plan was stick together. They weren't all put out either but just there was enough Engine companies there. I wanted to group back up with the Lieutenant. I wound up finding him and he had -- I helped carry a couple of stretchers. I learned later that one of the stretchers I carried was a friend of mine actually. I didn't know at the time.

Q. It was a Firefighter?

A. It was Lieutenant Desperito from Engine 1, where I used to be assigned. I was telling one of the guys in 22 Engine and they took it hard, a company south of us, I was telling him about it, because he was there and I remembered seeing him and I was telling him hey, I saw you and he said oh, yes, that was Lieutenant. I found out later that --

Q. Was that after coming out of the north tower or was that from the south tower, where was it basically?

A. He was being taken down, I believe he was in the north tower and they were taking him out. I just gave a hand. So after doing that, time was, I couldn't believe when everything was done later in the day. You

G. SUDEN

lose kind of track of time with the adrenaline going and all. It seemed like it went faster than it did and then looking back on it sometimes it seems slow. But at the time, I don't know how much time was in between.

But when I hooked up with the Lieutenant again, I heard later they had been helping people out also, helping bring out victims, but he had gotten an assignment. He had commandeered a Chief and said I need an assignment. He got us an assignment and it was to follow a Mayday that was coming from Chief Picciotto from the 11th Battalion. They were trapped inside the north tower, 1 World Trade Center. I didn't mention also when we were on the way down, like I said I was pretty clueless of the building being down and some of the things I do remember were the Maydays, one of the guys was saying he was in the rig, I don't know how much longer I am going to be able to breathe. You heard a lot of commotion on the radio.

Q. I'm in the rig, he said that. He was in the rig?

A. Yes, one of the guys was saying he was in the rig. I think he even gave the company and where he was. I don't remember all the information. I just

G. SUDEN

remember, there was a lot of screaming and a lot of -- you knew it was bad.

So now at this time, I hooked back up with the Lieutenant. It was the original crew, Matt Long, Frank Macchia, me and Mike Regan, who were originally on the line, we are crewed back up with these guys and there was also -- it was a little confusing because by now, the recall, there was guys from our company that weren't working that day but they were also with us. They somehow -- we found each other, you know.

Now we have our guys, even more guys, and we have Chief Ferran from the 12th Battalion, is a Chief that my Lieutenant, who is Rohan, Lieutenant Rohan, from 43, a regular assignment Lieutenant, they were leading the rescue to follow the Mayday. Ferran had led us -- I don't know the buildings but he led us through a building that I believe wasn't 1 World Trade Center. Thinking the next day I thought maybe it was part of the outskirts but it couldn't have been from the way the pancaking and being back there.

So we are from another building, we went down and they knew where the one Trade was at. I wasn't familiar with it but we went down an escalator and came to a shopping mall area, like a concourse or whatever,

G. SUDEN

and I remember passing these stores and I remember walking and thinking there is a wall -- we saw some more escalators that went down and up after we crossed this long hallway, as best as I can recall.

I remember at first thinking well, there is a wall running into it. But after looking at it I realized it was a big section of the ceiling that just like leaned to and collapsed. Like it only collapsed down and it was resting right on the bottom of the escalators, so there was this big slap of concrete and you couldn't just walk. You had to go under this slab from the ceiling to get into the escalator stairs and we were looking at each of them, looking for victims and also the main objective, was like I said, Ferran had radio contact with Picciotto, who was trapped somewhere in the north tower and that's what we were en route to.

Some guys got separated. We found some injured guys. I don't remember everything that went on. I remember my big objective was just to stay with the Lieutenant at this point. So I was pretty much sticking with him and some guys I guess, they brought out some more people so we got a little separated. Some rescues were going on. But Ferran and Rohan and

G. SUDEN

me, we were going out on to the rubble and who else followed, Picciotto had a bull horn, he had a siren, so not only was he making radio contact but he would say okay, I'm going to hit this siren now. Maybe you can hear abouts where I am.

It had to be hundreds of yards away but by the time we got up and climbed up a little bit and knew which way one tower was, we did start to hear the siren, but it was such an open area that we weren't sure if it was coming -- it seemed like it was coming from the left or straight ahead. We weren't sure, and to the right of us whatever building it was, I'm not sure, there was a really good fire going.

Visibility was really low. I remember we kept saying to each other wow, look at the (inaudible).

Q. Building 7?

A. I would think so. I would think that would probably be it before it fell. I remember it was bad and I'm going to get to a point where we came back that way on the way up. We couldn't even go that way, that's how bad the fire was, but by the time I was coming back it was rolling, more than a couple of floors, just fully involved, rolling.

Anyway, we hear this bull horn and some guys

G. SUDEN

got separated, so by now it's Ferran and some of our guys are still there but ultimately what happened was me, Lieutenant Rohan, Jimmy Lanza, Tommy Corrigan, that's the 4 of our guys. Rohan, me, Tommy Corrigan and Jimmy Lanza, were the 4 guys that continued on. I remember we had radio contact so I remember I really -- I was chomping at the bit to get to this guy, feeling like you are going to do something good now. We are going to go.

I remember Ferran asking us to stick tight and I was getting somewhat insubordinate but I didn't want to get cut off from going and making the push, so I remember walking ahead and like kind of just keep my back turned to him, because I knew Rohan and the guys, we wanted to go, but I think it probably would have been deemed too dangerous to do, but like I said, you hear your brother calling.

So at one point, Ferran I think was going to cut it off, but I walked far enough ahead and got through one of the big pieces of steel that were still resembling a Trade Center. There was very little that resembled anything any more, but one of those big pieces of steel with like an hourglass shape on the bottom, I got through that and I guess that's at the

G. SUDEN

point where Ferran said let some of us go and continue through.

We all got together and kept going. I lost track of time. I don't know how long that took either. That had to be a good little while, maybe an hour of hiking and following this bull horn still. It was all craters and beams and what not. Not that we lost, but we separated from the original amount of guys. So now it's us 4 and we are walking towards it and I remember it would have at one point been an easier path to go towards our right, but being building 7 -- that must have been building 7 I'm guessing with that fire, we decided to stay away from that because things were just crackling, falling and what not.

So we decided to go straight and which kind of made us like go down craters and up. After climbing beams for a while as we got closer, he was saying he sees light and we are trying to figure out he where he is still. He says he sees light and things are starting to clear up a little bit. He was seeing daylight. He had started to mention he was seeing daylight. I was going ahead a little more and at one point we asked him do you see anything that resembles anything.

G. SUDEN

We asked him -- there was another wall ahead that resembled I guess, like I said the hourglass, there was another piece of steel there and we said do you see that. He said yes it's right in front of me, so we knew he was on the other side of that looking at it towards us. We were there. So we said we are almost there. I guess it was comforting, like, he knew we were coming and so we had an idea, the bull horn was coming in clearer now.

So I went ahead, when I got through that steel and up a little further, I saw through and the smoke was moving like clouds, so one second you would see a little better and I remember yelling back and saying I see them. The first person I saw was a civilian and where they were was at the highest point in the rubble of what was left of the stairwell they were in. I think he said it was the C stairwell. I'm not sure. That was the highest point of the rubble and the only thing that -- the only void above the top of the pile and that's where they were; Picciotto, the Chief, was in, like, under the ceiling, under the very top of that, which was just rubble on top of pancaked stair slabs, the landings of the stairwell.

You could see straight through the stairs but

G. SUDEN

like I said, the first thing, I didn't even see them. The first thing I saw with the clouds and through the smoke was this civilian and I remember saying -- I thought it was a fireman. One of the guys (inaudible). He was sitting on top of the pile with a pole or probably what was the stand pipe coming out at an angle. He was kind of holding on to that ready to slide off the top of that.

I remember yelling from 30 yards away, hey, I see you. I have a personal rope in my pocket. Don't worry. I will give it to you. You can -- you will be able to slide down. Then I started to see Picciotto and those guys. I am like hey. Then as I get closer I realize, I'm talking to Charley and I realize that that guy is a civilian so I'm not going to be able to give him a rope. He is not going to be able -- he doesn't have a harness like we wear or whatever. I told him to sit tight, we will whatever, something will come, a ladder or a rope.

Picciotto, in the meantime, they were shook up. There was him and a few other guys standing there, so later on we learned how many people and who was who and there was a couple of civilians in there too. But Picciotto passed me a rope. There was a big crater in

G. SUDEN

front of them. They were on the stairwell. It became almost like a balcony for them because the wall was blown out on the front side while I was looking at them. There was a big hole there, so they were reluctant to start moving out of there by themselves and you couldn't see.

Things were starting to get a little better when we got -- so he passes me a rope and I'm spotting him and they are coming out over that hole. By this time, my Lieutenant and the other guys come up and my Lieutenant told me that these guys that were able to walk, lead them out. Bring them back to where we were.

As it turns out there was an injured civilian, a remember the black lady, I remember seeing her, and I remember Picciotto saying that I have contact with the Second Battalion. He's hurt bad. That was important to him. He was saying he had been speaking to the Chief, whose name was Prunty from the Second Battalion in floors below who later on died, he didn't make it out.

I remember him saying that, but as it turns out, there was a Port Authority cop who I thought was an ESU cop at the time. Not important, but he was able

G. SUDEN

to climb and walk, Picciotto was able to climb and walk. I remember them asking me how is the walk? I said it's rough climbing, but we can do it. We are going to get out of here. I know the way back out. My Lieutenant asked me to go back out that way.

So I started a little bit of a conga line and there was a couple of guys from 6 truck I remember, so I start going out with Picciotto and I think the guy's name was Dave Lynn, the Port Authority cop. They were the closest to me and we are making a line and I'm ahead and I'm going back out, showing them the way out that I came in.

So as I'm going back, that fire that was on my right is now on my left. I'm backtracking and that fire is really going and on the hike towards there, we put down our masks, which at this point I started to realize maybe it would have been a good thing if we had this mask on the way back, but then again, between the fire and about halfway when I was on the way back, I got a radio call from the guys that we left and it was Johnny Colon, the chauffeur of 43, who was effecting a different rescue. He was carrying somebody out.

He had called me and said hey, Jerry, don't try and get back out the way you went in, which was a

G. SUDEN

big heads up move, because he said that building was rolling on top of the building that we were passing. That building was on fire and likely to collapse more too.

Between Picciotto asking me are you sure we can get out this way because it really didn't look good with that fire and my guy telling me that you better not because of the area where we crawled in was unattainable now too. I said to Picciotto finally, who was questioning the whole time, I said yes, I guess you are right. We are going to find a different way. So we started going back the other way.

Q. Would that be towards West Street?

A. That would have been back towards what I know is the Winter Garden, because I will tell you in a minute.

Q. Here's the Winter Garden over here. On the other side of West Street?

A. So instead of going back, like backtracking the way we came in, I kind of was trying to the best I think I went as the crow flies, the opposite direction, straight out the other way back past the stairwell where they originally came out, maybe not to touch it, but to the right of it I believe it was and out that

G. SUDEN

way and it was a good while going back that way before we really knew what was even there. What we were going to see if we were going to get out, what was there.

So after going past the stairwell and we realized that that was a better way out. We went down, I remember another crater. However many yards. It was hundreds of yards all together, but down to the crater. When I finally reached a certain point, I saw when I came back up a hill, it's all beams. I saw guys, I saw firefighters and it was clear enough to see that we are going to get out this way now.

There was guys with hose lines but they were still hundreds of yards down. No one was really at this point. I know there was Chiefs down there, I learned later, that were telling the guys not to go too far into the rubble, trying to -- some guys eventually did. It was funny that the first guys I saw on the way out were guys from our company, from the Engine Company.

Anyway, so when I yelled back to Picciotto, I said Chief, we are going to get out this way. Relax them and Dave and the guys. I remember thinking at that point I need a drink. I want to get back to my Lieutenant, who told me he is going to stay with the

G. SUDEN

injured civilian, who was a black lady. However much I'm skipping.

The gist of it is from there Picciotto was good, those guys were good, we knew we were getting out. Picciotto said go and I went and I tried to get a drink. The first thing I did was as I got down more yards, got down a ways, they were trying to move in with a line and I took a drink out of the nozzle thinking I could get refreshed enough that way to go back and do some good with my Lieutenant again. I knew we were going to be working on the Second Battalion and whoever else might be in there.

I remember trying to call him and I couldn't reach him. I guess because what they were doing -- what I found out later what they were doing was going down lower through confined spaces under that stairwell to find guys who were down there, to find the Second Battalion Chief. So I couldn't reach him.

The saltwater I drank out of the nozzle did me worse than good, so I wound up walking out until I could finally get something to drink and in that Winter Garden, I just grabbed the spritzer, hit number 1, took a drink of what I guess was 7 Up and when I was walking on my way back in now after drinking about a gallon of

G. SUDEN

7 Up, when I was walking on the way back in I started getting a radio transmission from one of the guys that we left who was originally on the rig, had I believe the irons position, Todd, from my company, Todd Frederickson.

He is calling me, saying Jerry where are you. I said listen. I didn't go out the way I came in. I went straight out. As soon as I spoke to Todd, I guess he was with Ferran, who originally started the push to follow the Mayday for Picciotto. So Ferran must have took his radio right away. I guess they had been trying to reach me for a while, anybody of us, the original five, so Ferran took it and starts talking to me and says where are you? I said well, I didn't go out the way I went in. I went straight the opposite direction. He said well, where are you? I want to lead a rescue team to get in there, because I told him about the injured civilian, my Lieutenant staying there, the Second Battalion Chief probably being in trouble from what Picciotto said.

I guess I was just saying a lot of things. What I forgot was I should have just told him was that as I walked out more past these people, I had told rescue companies, I remember seeing the Captain of

G. SUDEN

Rescue 2 even and him grilling me when I told him, him grilling me even further, where, there, I said yes. That stairwell. You see a beam coming out on an angle, so you got to get your guys up there.

There is a guy, I remember I was describing and I was joking, I said you got a civilian on the top of that pile hanging on a flag pole just being dramatic. Describing it, that's really what it seemed like. That guy, I would love to meet him some day. I said you got an injured civilian in the stairway. You got my Lieutenant's back down there. Supposedly the Second Battalion is in, so I told rescue guys and I told everybody I was trying to gather guys to go back. That's where you got to go. It seemed like nobody was really making it that far. But actually I remember seeing Kevin Joos and Kevin Toorey and Al Schickler, I think they were like the first guys, as far as towards that stairwell, and they are from 53 Engine, and I told them where to go too.

What I could have told Ferran looking back -- everyone made mistakes and everyone wished we could have done more, but I should have told him I already put some guys on the trip to where to go. I could have said the Captain of Rescue 2, but he was being really

G. SUDEN

demanding and I was trying to describe where I was. He kept asking, well, where are you, what do you see. I said I went straight past where I went and I'm thinking to myself, there is no street signs around here and I'm trying not to be insubordinate, but I think at the last transmission I made I had offered to go out past,, because what I did to get a drink, I followed the line out to what you thought would be a street eventually, but I dead stopped in this bar in the Winter Garden, grabbed a board and went back out.

I went back out past that bar and told them I see a marina. If you want me to wait here, you know, I remember saying that. I see boats. I remember him saying boats, where are boats. Eventually I wound up telling him, I don't know where the fuck I am. I'm going to back to (inaudible).

I waited about as long as I could. I said guys are on it. I have been trying to gather guys up. I tried to describe it as best as I could. I walked back. I remember when I got back to where the Captain of Rescue 2 was and I was going to go back in, I remember the Captain telling me we don't need more guys up there that we are going to possibly have to get out, so don't go.

G. SUDEN

I hesitated about a second and turned my back on him and I'm going to go, like I said, and stick with the Lieutenant. I was a little upset we got separated a couple of times. I went back, I made it a little side step, went back down. Rolled back up to them. By the time I got up there they had the black lady on a Stokes. They were rescue guys. They had the guy down. Some of the rescue guys that got there later had effected getting that guy down with a rope.

The stairwell was filled with a couple of rescue guys and my Lieutenant. I went back to this stairwell, then you had to go around it to the other side to get back in it through that hole. Anyway, they were down.

Q. What point are we at now?

A. After Picciotto is out and the Port Authority cop and the guys from 6 Truck, the guys that were able to walk out at first, what I found out later was that my Lieutenant helped get -- there was guys from 39 Engine and 16 Truck and I don't know all the names, and eventually we will all talk with each other I guess, but they were trapped down low and Rohan had breached a wall to help them get out of the confined space below and stairwells.

G. SUDEN

At this point that was done. Those guys walked out, they followed the conga line, whatever, there was enough guys there to lead everybody out. When I got back the only thing that was being done now was unfortunately, Chief Prunty of the Second Battalion was dead now. We hadn't had a pulse on him from what I learned from the guys for a while. We were trying to effectively get him out of a confined space.

I found out later that Mark Carpiniello had went down a couple of confined spaces to find this guy. When we found him, my Lieutenant -- when I went back my Lieutenant, Mark Carpiniello, Jimmy Lanza. Mark Carpiniello is from 53 Engine. He is the guy that was there on his own time. He is also one of the first guys that came up. Jimmy Lanza, a guy from rescue 4, I think his name was Dave, real nice guy. The guy from Rescue 4, I guess, set up a high angle thing and was trying to move this guy now, so everyone that was alive and ambulatory -- and even that was not able to walk, but that was alive. They got the one lady out on a stretcher.

One of the guys from 6 Truck too, when we first started walking out, the reason Prunty asked me how is the climbing is this guy from 6 Truck Prunty

G. SUDEN

even knew, he has got a concussion. He got hit in the head bad, but they were able to hold him and walk him out and he was following behind. That was what was left to do.

I went down there. I was asking, give me a shot. Maybe I can lift this guy up, we had the rope. We were trying to get him out of this confined space, but the thing is even after we got him out of that space, we knew there was two more really tight spots to get through down the hallway and then back up. We actually crawled up a slab of stairs that was actually on an angle. That was the slab that was down a floor or two from the original stairwell that Prunty walked out of. It was below grade what was there, the pile, where the stand pipe was. There was a few really tight areas to get this guy out that we went through. We had to climb high to get between two door jams and I think the door jams were about the only thing holding that place up where Prunty was. We would have had to get him out of that spot and then lift him high enough to get him between those doors and then another hole and we would have been happy to do all that, but we were being told for a while after I was back, and I think they were telling me even before I got back we got to

G. SUDEN

get out of here, because it's still shifting and it's smoky and things are still clanging, falling around.

Q. Did 7 collapse yet?

A. 7 hasn't collapsed yet. We were being told by -- I guess everybody was being a little insubordinate that day. Everyone wanted to do as much as they could, but we were told 5 minutes, I don't know how many times. It was a long while before we gave up and we finally came to the conclusion and the rescue guy agreed, we all agreed, it's irretrievable. It's not a rescue. I regret to say we left him there knowing that we would get him eventually and I heard that they got him out a couple of days later. Thanks to the information, we told him where he was.

Q. Okay, pretty much everything?

(TAPE ENDS)

File No. 9110031

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD BILLY

Interview Date: October 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

R. BILLY

MR. CASTORINA: Today's date is October 10, 2001. My name is Ron Castorina. I'm at Engine 24. Accompanied with me is --

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt.

Q. We are here to interview --

A. Firefighter Richard Billy, Engine Company 24.

Q. Firefighter Billy, on September 11, can you tell us about that day, where you were and what happened?

A. We got a call for an explosion in the World Trade Center number 1, roughly about a quarter to nine, around there. Got there a few minutes later. I think we parked the rig on West and Vesey.

MR. CASTORINA: Excuse me one second. The time is 1123. Sorry. Go ahead.

A. Okay. Then we entered the north tower on the map there for 1 World Trade Center. We were in the lobby for a minute or two. We followed, our company followed Ladder 20. I believe it was Ladder 20. I don't remember this stairwell, but I believe we followed Ladder 20. We basically were going up with our rollups and our equipment. We took a breather on floor number 29 and with Ladder 20 also.

After a while, we were there for a couple of

R. BILLY

minutes and then taking a breather. Lieutenant Hansson of my -- of Engine Company 24 told me there was a civilian, a handicapped person with a friend of his on the 29th floor. He told me to stay with him because we were riding heavy. We had an extra guy. I had a radio. He told me to stay with him. They went up to a couple of more floors to the staging area, I believe they went to 35, I'm not sure. I was with them for a few minutes.

What happens is a couple of other people came by, they wanted to look at their office, I don't know why, but for some reason. About that time, I don't know exactly what time, I don't have the times down, but there was a collapse. At this time, I never knew that number 2 World Trade Center was ever hit at this point. I'm thinking it's the top of our floor, our building, number 1. That's what I'm thinking.

At that moment, of the collapse, there was a Captain from the 21 Engine named William Burke. I happened to know him because he used to be a fireman at 24. He shows up at that time. I'm with this handicapped person alone. William Burke, Captain William Burke and his men show him up and I told him I have this handicapped. I'm with him alone. He took

R. BILLY

over for me at that moment. He was to go with the handicapped person and his friend.

At about that moment, Lieutenant Hansson came down and the other men from 24 came down and said Rich, let's go. We started proceeding down from the 29th floor.

Q. Were you getting any radio transmissions, because you said you had a radio?

A. I had a radio but I really can't recall hearing anything. He just told me we had to leave. Got to about the second or third floor and there was a fireman from Squad 18 named Pat Kelly. He said he needed help. There was another person who couldn't walk. I think he had broken legs, I'm not sure. What we did was we split up. Me and Lieutenant Hansson and Firefighter Sterling went with Pat Kelly. The other two I think continued down that stairwell, wherever that was.

We went through the building into -- with Firefighter Kelly from 18, to help with this other handicapped. I don't think he was handicapped. I think he had broken legs. I'm not sure. He couldn't walk.

Q. Was he a heavy set male?

R. BILLY

A. Yes, very heavy, and we had Port Authority cops with us too, so we got him down another flight of stairs I guess in to some kind of lobby. We dragged him across, got to the entrance or the exit, building number 1.

Q. Do you want to mark it off.

A. Somewhere around here. Whatever the exit is here. We ran across to building number 6. Us, three from 24 Engine, Lieutenant Hansson, me and Sterling, Pat Kelly, another fireman and a couple of PA cops ran. At that point they had enough men between the PA and they had enough men to take care of him. We had way too many men. We started to leave, 24.

At that moment the collapse came. As I found out, that would be in our building. We went across, we ran across over here. It started collapsing. After that, we couldn't see anything. It was all very dark and brown. Couldn't see anything. We are just waiting. I'm thinking we are trapped. I was giving a Mayday, I believe. I think the only response --

Q. Did you take cover somewhere?

A. We went back into the building. After we came down, the building overhang, because the building had an overhang.

R. BILLY

Q. As it was coming down where were you?

A. I was about here.

Q. You had an overhang over here?

A. There was an overhang, kind of like an overhang. That's it. We survived. I found Sterling but I couldn't find Hansson. I thought he was dead. I went back in here a little bit and came back out. I thought we were trapped, so I gave Maydays out. I don't think I heard -- somebody responded, what ended up being Hansson I think. I thought he was there. I thought it was somebody else from 24. I don't think we were trapped. After a while it lifted. We saw some light here.

Q. Did you get injured in any way, anybody get injured?

A. No, only abrasions of the eyes. So I ran over here, and there is sort of like a 30 foot drop so I didn't want to jump.

Q. What street is that?

A. Vesey, like a 30 foot drop. If I had to I would have jumped. But I waited a little bit more. We found stairs over here. There were stairs here that led to the street around here, somewhere around here there is stairs, outside stairs. Went down, then I

R. BILLY

came out. Actually I came out with Pat Kelly and some other fireman. I found out later I think Sterling must have jumped over here. I'm not sure. Hansson I thought was missing. When I came out of here --

Q. Once you came out where did you end up?

A. I saw some kind of command post outside, somewhere, maybe around here. I'm not sure.

Q. You worked your way over there?

A. Yes. Then I'm like in a daze, so I kept walking around, then I found some other guys from 24 that came in on their own.

Q. Then you started meeting up with people?

A. Then I was taken to the hospital. Because I couldn't --

Q. Eyes --

A. My eyes were killing me.

Q. How was your breathing?

A. My breathing was all right.

Q. So you were treated and released?

A. Yes.

Q. What hospital did you go to?

A. The NYU downtown, right by Pace University.

Q. Anything else you remember or want to add?

You have pretty much covered everything. If there is

R. BILLY

anything else you want to add. How was the lighting in the stairs and the smoke conditions initially when you were in the building?

A. There was no smoke. You mean going up?

Q. Yes, when you were going up. When you were on the 20th floor helping --

A. 29th.

Q. 29th. How was that floor? Was there any smoke or anything?

A. No.

Q. Everything looked normal?

A. Everything looked normal. Never knew the other tower was hit.

Q. When the building started collapsing you heard the rumble and --

A. Which building, the other one?

Q. Yes.

A. I heard that, I never --

Q. Where were you at that point?

A. On the 29 floor.

Q. On the 29 floor. In other words, when you got the signal from Lieutenant Hansson let's go, you were up in the 29th?

A. Yes, with the handicapped person. That was

R. BILLY

taken over by Captain Burke and his men.

Q. Okay. Anything else you want to add?

A. No.

MR. CASTORINA: Okay. This concludes the
interview. The time now is 11:33 a.m.

File No. 9110049

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DEAN COUTSOUROS

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

D. COUTSOUROS

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 11th, 2001, the time now is 1250 hours, and this is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Please state your name, rank and command.

FIREFIGHTER COUTSOUROS: Dean Coutsouros, Firefighter 2nd Grade, Engine 220.

MR. FEILER: Of the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting the interview at the Lieutenant's office of Engine 220. The interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Go ahead.

A. Okay. We arrived, we came over the Brooklyn Bridge and we wound up on the West Side Highway just north of building 7, World Trade Center No. 7. We proceeded to grab cylinders and all our gear and we marched down the West Side Highway to Liberty Street where the pedestrian walkway is. Under the pedestrian walkway we met up with a Chief. The Chief gave my Captain orders for us to go into 2 World Trade Center.

We went to the parking lot directly across from the World Trade Center. There was whole bunch of debris coming down on Liberty Street, which prevented

D. COUTSOUROS

us from walking down Liberty, and we got in front of 90 West Street, we held up there for a few minutes underneath the scaffolding to reassess the situation, how we were going to get into the building. There was all kinds of human debris. The landing gear of the aircraft was in that parking lot there. It was right near us. There was all kind of stuff all over the floor. Other companies near us, I think, were 205 and there was a truck company there, but I'm not really sure who it was. It might have been 117.

The Captain took us, we went through 90 West Street, we went through the front door, we came out the back door. The Captain was Stephen Grabher. He was a covering Captain that day. Him and Owen Carlock made it behind the Bankers Trust building. I was directly in the middle of the street on Washington Street, and there were two guys, three guys behind me, and I was right in the middle of the street and that's when the tower started to come. I happened to be looking up at it, and from the fire floor down, it was just like a really loud crackling noise, it sounded like a million firecrackers, and just a wave, right from the fire floor down, just a wave that started to come down.

Q. Do you know who the two firefighters were

D. COUTSOUROS

that were with you?

A. Right. Mike Schroeck, George Marsh and Eddie Plunkett. I happened to run straight ahead and I went east and I got behind the Bankers Trust building, which has a little overhang and there's steel columns holding up the overhang. We tucked in behind that overhang there. George Marsh and Eddie Plunkett and Mike Schroeck actually stayed behind 90 West because by that time it was already coming down. They had no chance to cross the street, Washington Street. We tucked in behind this building and in seconds it was nighttime. The dirt was over my head. I was chewing it trying to get some air. We didn't know what really was going on. I saw the building come down, but I think I was the only one who actually saw it come down.

As soon as everything collapsed, that loud rumble, everything collapsed, Owen Carlock handed me an ax. The Captain screamed we've got to get inside this building. I took an ax and I smashed the window, but it was just a dummy panel. It was wall behind it. I smashed the next window, no luck. I threw my helmet off, I put my face piece on, which was filled with debris, shook it out, put my face piece on. We went west. We went back to Washington Street, searched this

D. COUTSOUROS

wall left for a door, and over here there is a service entrance and we wound up getting in the door here. We all got in there.

Q. Did you hook up back with the other firefighters?

A. Not as of yet.

Q. Okay.

A. Me, Owen and the Captain wound up getting in here, plus a couple other guys, there was like a truck unit, guys I don't even know who they were, and we wound up getting in there. Then like once the dirt settled, there was still a lot of dust, but once the dirt settled, like a few minutes, we wound up hooking up back with the other three guys. We met them in it's like a little courtyard right there on the side of this building.

We regrouped, we got our stuff together, and we went back out to the West Side Highway, right about here, and we were starting to walk. We wanted to get north of the towers. We were trying to get back up around here, and right about here, on Albany and Washington, is when the first building came down, and the debris cloud started coming. So we started going south on the West Side Highway and we got into this

D. COUTSOUROS

building right here, which I think is the Millenium Hilton or something like that. This building has revolving doors.

Q. Between Albany and Carlisle?

A. Right. That building right there. As the debris cloud came down, we got covered in it, but I knew I was facing east.

Q. That's the one in the hotel?

A. Right.

Q. Okay.

A. There was a revolving door and I saw the light through it and we wound up all getting in there, except for Mike Schroeck. He went running down this way. He just took off down the West Side Highway. There was all people in there. We got some water. Some guy had -- I don't know where it came from, Red Cross maybe or something like that. There was just a barrel of water on ice out of nowhere. We helped people get down out of this building after it all settled and all. The Captain went and searched for Mike Schroeck. He didn't know where he was. We lost him at that point. We were helping people come this way and getting them south towards the Battery Tunnel.

After that we regrouped once again, we all

D. COUTSOUROS

got everybody, we got Mike Schroeck back together, we all stayed as a unit and we crossed the West Side Highway. We went around whatever that street is that crosses over. We crossed the West Side Highway and there were a couple of car fires and some paper and debris there, and we left George Marsh there. He's NPO. We left him there to pump water for I think it was 210 I think was the engine and he pumped water for them. We left him and we went around to -- let's see exactly. Where is this notch here?

Q. That's the harbor.

A. Right. This is where we wound up.

Q. Then you had to go down East End Avenue.

A. Right. We went around here. We came down East End. Actually, we put a fire out in a building that's right there. We went through here. There was a fire building. We started stretching all the lengths that the fireboat had through I guess it's the Merrill Lynch Building. The Winter Garden was -- that half dome was collapsed over here. We started stretching lines, everything the fireboat had, through this Merrill Lynch Building. We got like halfway, but this whole side of the building was collapsed. It was a little scary. We started stretching lines and hooking

D. COUTSOUROS

up hose, and then all of a sudden a company came walking over with a firefighter in a Stokes basket and his head was crushed pretty bad. So we took the Stokes basket and we went down -- there's a ramp here.

Q. You loaded him on the boat?

A. We loaded him on the fireboat and the fireboat took off. Now our line is dead. Over here there was a gas leak. The Police Department was telling everybody to get out of the area, blah blah blah.

Q. Can you just verbalize the street corner there?

A. Okay. We went over -- I guess 4 World Financial, Merrill Lynch, is Vesey and North End, that corner building. We went down this street, which isn't marked here, whatever it is. The Captain told Owen Carlock and Eddie Plunkett to go get our rig, which is right here at this time. We were going to bring our rig back here and pump water. That was the last I saw of them. They're alive and everything, but we didn't see them the rest of the day.

We came back over here, right by Gateway Plaza, right on this corner of Liberty, I don't know the building there, but it's a residential building.

D. COUTSOUROS

We were sitting there taking a blow, washing our eyes out because our eyes were bleeding, and as we're sitting there with our coats off, I look up and black smoke starts billowing out of the 9th floor window. So the Captain goes, all right, get your gear on.

So it's now just me, Captain Steve Grabher, Mike Schroeck and myself, the three of us, there was like a loaner rig, one of those rigs from the rock or whatever it was, a 5 something, 515 rig, we tested the hydrant and there was no water, this guy John Orloff, Buffalo, from 201, he's a Lieutenant. The Captain says, all right, come on, guys. We grabbed two cans off that rig and we walked up to the 9th floor to that apartment. There was someone there already forced the door. We went in with the cans to try to see what we could do. It was already vented, so it was just a lot of flame, not too much smoke, not too bad. We went in with the cans. It did nothing.

We went back down to the 8th floor and Buffalo, Fireman Orloff, was pulling up. He dropped a Clorox bottle. He was pulling up two lengths of two and a half to hook to the standpipe. A guy in front of me grabbed a nozzle. I had a knife. I was cutting the rope off the nozzle. We went up to the 9th floor. We

D. COUTSOUROS

got there and I figured I'd back this guy up and he just handed me the nozzle. Now I realized he didn't have a mask. So I masked up, I got the nozzle, I went in. They hooked up one length from like the standpipe on that floor. They broke it one length and that was it. It was right there. The apartment was right next to the standpipe.

I went in, knocked down two rooms of fire, had absolutely no pressure. There was a couch next to me that was burning like directly by my shoulder, but every time I turned the nozzle, I was cutting off my water. I had absolutely no pressure. So I pushed the couch out of the way, knocked down the two rooms. I stood up, I got a little past it and turned around and hit the couch. Just as I finished hitting that area right there, I turned around, a little corner flared up again, and then I ran out of water. There was no water because the gravity tank must have took a hit or whatever or just that was it. I wound up shaking the hose to put the rest of the fire out. Once there was no more flame, we shut down, came back out. The Captain was searching all the apartments on that floor and Mike Schroeck. We came back out, we regrouped, and we started heading down the stairs.

D. COUTSOUROS

Q. The firefighter that you backed up, do you know who that was?

A. No, he backed me up. I have no idea who he was.

Q. Was he on duty or off duty?

A. I don't know. He had a mask so... It's hard to tell because masks were being traded. God knows. I didn't even know what company he was from. He might have been from 201 because there was a bunch of 201 guys up there, but I really don't know who he was or whatever happened. We were just trying to put this fire out, which we did.

Coming down the stairs, the floor, with all the soot and gook on our feet and stuff, it was really slippery. I fell like a half landing on my back. We got two floors down, me and the Captain, and Mike Schroeck, we heard him fall down a whole flight of stairs. We just heard bang bang.

We got back down in front of the building. At that point we were pretty much spent. This is, you know, it's late in the afternoon now. This isn't all happening all at once.

Q. I know.

A. The time, you know. We went over to the end

D. COUTSOUROS

of Liberty, like over here. Well, actually --

Q. Was this towards late afternoon or early evening?

A. This has got to be like 3:00, 3:30, around there.

Q. Okay.

A. Around 3:00ish. Because I remember making a phone call at 2:30, before that. I'm not sure.

Q. It's not important.

A. We went down by the water and that was it for the end of us. My back was hurt, my shoulder. All of us were hurting and we just like actually laid there. I wound up meeting up with this guy, Dave Koyles from Ladder 122, who had just been in a collapse in the Marriott. He was in the Vista, in that lobby. We wound up getting a ride from a civilian in a suburban because we wanted to get triaged. We couldn't do any more. That's it. We gave our masks up to another company and me and Dave Koyles wound up getting a ride from a civilian down where all the boats are. We got triaged somewhere over here. They wanted to take us to Ellis Island or New Jersey, which we said we're never going to get home.

From there we wound up getting up from there,

D. COUTSOUROS

walking away, some guy with a golf cart took us down to like Battery Park. From there two detectives threw us in the back of their car and they took us to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal.

Q. Back to Staten Island?

A. They got us in an ambulance to go to Methodist Hospital. We both wound up in Methodist Hospital that day and that's the end of my story.

Q. When you first arrived en route to the scene, do you know if you were given any specific locations to go to?

A. I don't know about that. I know that it was about ten after 9:00 we were crossing the Brooklyn Bridge.

Q. So the first building was hit by that time?

A. Both buildings were hit at that time. When the first building was hit, I actually took a picture from the roof of the firehouse. Then the second plane went in and that's when we got called in. On the fifth alarm we went.

Q. Just to put things a bit, where were you when the second building collapsed?

A. When the second building collapsed, which was Tower 1, I was in the middle of the West Side Highway.

D. COUTSOUROS

I was on the southbound side of the West Side Highway, maybe one block away, Albany Street.

Q. Did you have a radio with you?

A. No. Nozzle man does not have a radio. But I really -- I took pictures. I always keep a disposable camera in my pocket. I took pictures coming over the bridge, and just before I came over the bridge, I took a picture of the crowd and it happened to catch a clock just by the Brooklyn Bridge and it said almost -- it was like maybe eight, ten after 9:00. I got a picture of our rig going over the bridge. When we first pulled up, I took a picture right where we parked the rig. I took a picture right under this scaffolding of 90 West Street, and that was about it. I took pictures of the guys later on and stuff like that and the debris.

Q. Initially you said that a Chief directed you?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know what Chief that was?

A. I do not know, no. It was really chaos and mayhem and we were just -- we didn't even bring roll-ups or anything because we figured so many companies were in, we were just going up and relieve a company on the line to put this fire out. Never thought it was going to come down.

D. COUTSOUROS

Q. Right.

A. We were trying -- what the Captain said, he wanted to take us around. We wanted to attack on a diagonal to get into the building, because this way and this way, everything was -- just so many jumpers and debris falling, all kinds of shit. So there was no way to go down Liberty Street. There was stuff all -- and we just heard that a jumper landed on somebody right here. So we weren't going this way. We wound up choosing a wider route, and we didn't even get to -- you know, as soon as we started out, the building came down.

Q. Okay. Is there anything else that you think is important that you'd like to add at this time?

A. That's about it.

MR. FEILER: We're going to conclude the interview. I want to thank you on behalf of the Department for participating in this. The time now is 1305 hours and we'll conclude the interview.

File No. 9110051

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL SCHROECK

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

M. SCHROECK

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 11th, 2001. The time now is 1313 hours and this is Monty Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual:

Please state your name, rank and assigned command.

FIREFIGHTER SCHROECK: Firefighter Michael Schroeck, Engine 220, 5th Grade.

MR. FEILER: Of the New York City Fire Department. We're interviewing at the quarters of Engine 220 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present is...

MR. DUN: Richard Dun.

MR. FEILER: And...

LIEUTENANT JEZYCKI: Lieutenant Jezycki.

Q. If you can just give me a scenario of what occurred that morning.

A. Okay. I can recall sitting in house watch and seeing the first plane hit. That's where Truck Company 122 was heading out the door responding to their staging area by the Battery Tunnel. Moments later the second plane hit and we were dispatched over there.

M. SCHROECK

Taking the Brooklyn Bridge, you could see the smoke, flames, from that view, I would say a lot of chaos, people running, the bridges were packed. We're continuing through. We parked around I guess that's the West Side Highway, west of Vesey there, and I guess that's where we parked, grabbed our gear and headed towards Liberty looking for I guess the staging area where I guess we were supposed to get our orders.

Q. Did you meet an officer at Liberty or did your Captain speak to an officer?

A. Yes. The Captain spoke to I guess -- I really don't recall, to be honest, just I guess caught up in the whole thing, seeing what we saw, and I guess I was just following him.

Q. You said you were on house watch that morning?

A. Yes. I was in the house watch. I don't recall if I had house watch that morning, but I was in the house watch at that time.

Q. When the first plane hit, you said you saw it or you heard it?

A. Yes. Somebody called out to put on I guess Channel 5, Fox, where it was being shown, and that's where I was viewing it for the first time.

M. SCHROECK

Q. Do you recall getting any phone calls or radio transmissions?

A. No, I don't.

Q. Okay. You responded before the second plane struck or afterwards?

A. I believe it was when the second plane struck.

Q. That's when your unit, your engine was called out?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember who was on the engine with you?

A. We had Geo Marsh, we had a covering Captain, Captain Grabher, we had Dean Coutsouros, we had Owen, who was from 122, we had Plunkett, Edward Plunkett, Edmund Plunkett, one more member.

Q. Were they on-duty personnel?

A. Well, it was in between the tour change and so...

Q. On the way down there, did you pick up any other firefighters, any civilians?

A. Yes. There was an ex-member who joined us while we were down there. We didn't pick anyone until we got there. I mean who came with us when we were on

M. SCHROECK

the scene. We didn't pick up anybody en route there. The gentleman's name, I'm not sure. I think his first name was Joe.

Q. From these quarters?

A. No. I think he used to work out of 122.

Q. He was off duty or on duty?

A. He was off duty. He didn't have bunker gear or anything like that.

Q. Okay. How about civilians? Did you have to treat anybody or anybody approach the Engine Company for that?

A. I think that was John Germain.

Q. John Germain.

A. I believe his first name, yes, John Germain, yes, and he did have bunker gear, but when I first saw him, I don't think he was wearing it on or whatever.

Q. Okay. So you got to Liberty and West. Did you get instructions to go into any of the buildings?

A. What I can recall was when we were coming down, I guess heading south, I guess past the staging area here, I believe it was located right around here.

Q. Liberty and West.

A. I can remember going underneath the walkway there.

M. SCHROECK

Q. That's Liberty and West Street, the pedestrian walkway.

A. Continuing I guess going up Liberty here, I know there was like a little parking lot area there.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't know if it's the Marriott parking lot or it was a private parking lot.

Q. That's a private parking lot over here.

A. Oh, this is it here?

Q. Yes.

A. Right. So I can remember coming up this street here.

Q. Chambers Street.

A. Right. We were standing right around here when, obviously, jumpers were coming down and I guess we were concerned about that. I don't know at that point where we were heading or what, but I can remember that the Captain gave us some orders to I guess come around somehow and then led us toward I think Washington here, I believe, and I guess I was standing right around here, so right around Washington and maybe Albany, Cedar, Cedar to Albany. I don't know. I can remember we were backing out of this area here. We were around here somewhere when it started collapsing.

M. SCHROECK

We hear the roaring and we all just pretty much --

Q. Was that the collapse of Tower 1, the south tower?

A. Tower 1, the first collapse.

Q. Okay. The first, the south tower.

A. I guess we backed up, coming down Washington, Albany area here. I remember guys saying to me stick with us, stick with us, and that was before the collapse starting and before we even knew there was going to be a collapse.

Q. Do you know who that was?

A. Dean. Dean actually told me to stick with him, make sure I stick with him and stuff like that, and that was prior to going en route and all that. He was, of course, making me be aware, if anything, stick around, stick with the members. But when the collapse came down, I don't know what happened, but I found myself away from everybody.

Q. Just you or were you with anybody?

A. Me? I was alone.

Q. You were by yourself?

A. Yes. I can't speak where -- talking to the guys afterwards, I found out where they went. I think it was like right in this building here, this Trust

M. SCHROECK

Plaza here, I believe, and I shot over here, this building here, I believe in this corner right in here, there was like a little doorway here where I was able to get some protection there from falling debris.

Q. That was on the southwest corner of Washington and Albany?

A. Yes, I believe. Looking at this map, it looks like that's where I was. I could be mistaken, but I think it's like in right here, if I'm not mistaken, right on this corner here. I was there for it felt forever, you know, as it was coming down, a lot of emotions, a lot of things going through the mind. As far as life goes, I didn't think there was much left.

Q. What were the conditions? What did you see?

A. You couldn't really see much, I mean, at that point anyway. I pretty much had my face tucked into the building there, my body tucked into the building, and I guess with the falling debris, the building collapse, you couldn't see much, you couldn't hear much but the roaring and, you know, obviously, you weren't going to hear anything over that. I didn't think I was going to make it in, if that's where we were trying to get to. I don't know. But I found myself just sitting

M. SCHROECK

there.

Q. Okay. So once the debris settled, then what did you do?

A. Pretty much I backed out looking for the rest of the members because you could hear all pass alarms going off, people screaming, companies calling. The first thing I heard was 220, 220, and I continued -- I backed out, climbing over a couple of little -- you know, debris was in the way and stuff like that.

Q. Did you hook up with your unit at that point?

A. Yes. I winded up hooking up with my guys shortly after that, a couple minutes after that, and then I think at that point we were started to retreat, I don't know, trying to find out -- trying to figure out where exactly were we. I think by the time we gathered, I don't know if we kind of shot down more Washington or maybe we went back towards Liberty here when the second collapsed. It took a couple of minutes by the time everybody gathered up and got together and all the members were together and stuff.

Q. Okay. Now the second building came down.

A. Yes. I think we were more so on -- I guess we shot back up this way here because I can remember

M. SCHROECK

being on the west side. Exactly where on the west side I don't know, but when the second one collapsed, I was a little bit further away than the first one. I must have been around -- I don't know if I was this far here. I must have been around -- this is where I was for the first one. Maybe about here somewhere. I can remember being in a building there where --

Q. The hotel?

A. I don't know if it was the hotel or what.

Q. There was a revolving door?

A. It might have been the hotel.

Q. Okay. That was the hotel?

A. There were people in here. We were trying to get people out, telling them to run down this way here, further south. There was some water there, which we all needed.

Q. Okay. That was in the hotel.

A. Yes.

Q. So the second building collapsed. You recovered. Then what did you do after that? Did you regroup? Did you go anywhere else?

A. Once again I lost my guys and I guess, again, when the dust started to settle, we started making our way back. I can remember there was a girl, I believe

M. SCHROECK

an EMS girl, she was like all dazed up there, and I kind of assisted her south. I think I walked her maybe a block or so.

Q. Did you get her name?

A. No, I did not get her name. I did not get her name. She was a little dazed up, I can remember that, and obviously hysterical crying, confused. Whether she was hurt or whatever, I couldn't tell at that point. I assisted her a little further down to where I guess I led her, you know, walk south here.

Q. Now, at that point did you go back up?

A. Yes. At that point I went back up this way, where I met my guys again.

Q. Okay.

A. Then we pretty much scattered. I can remember putting out -- I remember the debris crushing through windows and I guess it was apartment fires everywhere here. I think it might have even been one of these two buildings.

Q. Did you go stretch the hose --

A. Oh, yes.

Q. -- from the marine?

A. Yes. I think at that point, yes, actually, at that point we did come down here. Yes. They had

M. SCHROECK

the boat here and we were trying to --

Q. (Inaudible).

A. Is that here?

Q. Yes.

A. Right around here the boat was, right. It was right against the Winter Garden. We tried to stretch -- get a line in place into the Winter Garden there. But I think they were talking about I guess an odor, a gas odor, a possible collapse and stuff like that, and we were using caution and stuff like that. But I think we got it in place and they brought an injured member here, head trauma, and he winded up going on the boat. They escorted him where they needed to.

Q. That's when you lost the line.

A. Yes, that line was pretty much done with. I can remember going back this way, or at least I think the chauffeur and another member went around somewhere, I guess to find a rig and get the rig in place somewhere else. We were bouncing back here for a couple of minutes, and then I guess we went back over here somewhere where -- oh, yes. Gateway Plaza. Here. We found ourselves in front here for a little while where there were a couple other members from

M. SCHROECK

different companies. I don't recall what companies. I don't recall what members.

Q. What did you do at that location?

A. I can remember regrouping. There was more fluid there for us. Until I think on the 10th floor there was fire. We wound up going up. There was no hydrant pressure. We went up with a couple of cans here, the Captain, Dean, and I don't know who else was there. I don't think initially there was anyone with us. We went up. Whether there were a couple other units who went up prior, I don't remember, but I know when we got there, there were more members there when we went up to put it out. I remember seeing Buffalo. He used to work at this house here. He was pulling up hose. We hooked up to the standpipe, we went up and...

Q. Then after you got the fire out, what did you do?

A. We came back down. I was pretty much shot then, a little left. I can remember falling. I can remember falling. We came back down here, and I think we regrouped again. A couple of members were injured and somebody transported us to another place where I think they went to a hospital.

Q. How did you get home that evening?

M. SCHROECK

A. After that point, I went with the Captain. A couple of the guys, like I said, left, I guess, to get medical attention.

Q. (Inaudible).

A. Yes. They jumped in a Blazer or something like that, which took them to I guess the boat or wherever, and I found myself with the Captain here and we went back.

Q. To the truck?

A. We went back I believe to this point here where --

Q. Vesey and West?

A. Yes. I believe it was this point here, where it was tons and tons of vehicles and members. That was pretty much it. I know we sat here for a little while. I remember doing what we needed to do. Then I can remember, I would say late evening, I don't really recall the time, maybe around 6:00, I don't know, that's when we were transported, the Captain and myself, over to I believe Bellvue.

Q. Oh, okay. So you did go to the hospital?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there anything else that you want to add that you think is important?

M. SCHROECK

A. No, not that I recall at this time.

MR. FEILER: We want to thank you for cooperating and participating in this. It's very important that we get this information. With that in mind, we'll conclude the interview. This concludes the interview at 1328 hours.

File No. 9110052

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ARTHUR MYERS

Interview Date: October 11, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CUNDARI: Today is October 11th, 2001. The time is 12:10 hours. This is George Cundari with Murray Murad, Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

FIREFIGHTER MYERS: My name is Alfred Myers, Sr., a first grade fireman. I'm in Engine 39.

MR. CUNDARI: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We're at Engine 39. This interview is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Arthur, can you tell us what happened that day from your perspective?

A. That morning I was at the watch and I got someone to relieve me. I went upstairs to take a shave and change my shirt. While I was going to shave, Jimmy Long came running past me. I said, "What's the matter?" He said, "A plane just hit the World Trade Center. It's on Channel 5."

Him and I both went and turned the TV on. We saw where the plane hit. At that time we said we're a high-rise unit, I know we're getting ready to go. So I changed my shirt. Sure enough it came in as a second alarm, and we were responding. 39 responded at that time.

Being that I'm the chauffeur, I went to the rig, started the rig up, hit the bells, got the guys ready, and we took off to go down there. En route down there, it went straight to a fifth alarm. It didn't go -- normally they say, "In the borough of Manhattan, a third alarm has been transmitted or fourth alarm." They didn't do that. It went from a second straight to the fifth alarm.

I took Second Avenue down to Houston Street, went across Houston over to West Street, with which we turned. By the time I got to Houston, it went to a second fifth alarm. That's when the second plane hit.

We proceeded down there --

Q. Did you hear the second plane hit?

A. We heard the second plane hit from the radio transmit. I didn't see, but we heard it.

Q. You heard it, the bang?

A. The bang. Then it went straight to a second faith alarm. It didn't go second, third, fourth, fifth. They just skipped all that and went straight to a fifth. I said, a second fifth alarm? Both towers are hit now.

I got over to West Street. I was at Houston and West Street. When I turned onto West Street, I said, "Oh, shit, look at this." Both buildings were fully involved. A big blast of fire was just blowing out windows.

We proceeded down West Street down to the towers. High-rise is following rig. Like I said, we're a high-rise unit. They follow us in, driven by Jeff Coniglio. When I got there, they told us pull up right behind 3 Engine, which is what I did. High-rise pulled up right beside me but right across from me.

At that time the guys got out. They started donning masks and everything. I was telling them, "Be careful. Put your gloves on, put your hood on, turn your oxygen on and just be careful."

Q. What was that location you parked?

A. We parked right on West Street, right up from the north tower. I was further away from the north tower, a block from it.

Q. So you were past Vesey.

A. Past Vesey.

Q. Past the pedestrian overpass.

A. Past Vesey but right in this section here because this is the north tower here, I can see the front entrance to the north tower. So I must be somewhere down in here.

Now the guys are gone. I'm looking. I see what I just couldn't believe. I thought it was a big doll baby, but these were burnt people falling. Right after that then you see live people jumping. This is the first time I've ever seen people jump like this in my whole career.

Q. 20 years.

A. In 20 years, this is the first time I've ever witnessed this, and it was just blowing my mind.

The chauffeur from 3 Engine, he was telling me, listen, don't look, just don't -- I said, "How can I not look? I've never seen this before." Just any time you thought that would be

it, then you'd see more waves of people coming. It was like raining people. You could hear when they hit the ground, bang, bang, and the body parts just dismantling all over the place.

At that time it just got to me. I turned around to look away from it, and I'm saying to myself these are people. Man, there are people dying here. I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

When I turned around, someone -- they said the chief ordered them to move 39 Engine, my rig wasn't there. I said, "Where the hell is 39?" It's like somebody stealing your car. What they did was they took our rig and put it right in front of the north tower.

I said, "Wait a minute. They're full of shit. They're not going to leave the rig there." Now you see the bodies just falling down.

So at that time a proby came over to me. He said, "Look, I'm a proby. I'm off duty. I want to help." I said, "Whatever you do, don't go in that building. You're off duty. If something happens to you, they won't pay your

family nothing. You just stay with me. Whatever you do, don't go in the building," because at that point debris was coming down plus the bodies.

Rigs are coming in. Guys are on top of the rigs just going full blast into this. Now, him and I ran over. I get the rig. The chief orders me to hook up to the Siamese. I said, "Bullshit. I'm not hooking up here." Some of the guys get in the rig, which he did. I got in the rig. The chief was telling me, "Hook up to the Siamese. Leave this rig here." I said, "Bullshit. Get out of the way."

Q. Where was this Siamese?

A. The Siamese right -- this is the front of the north tower? Right by the entrance, right to the right of the entrance before you go in. The Siamese was right there.

Q. That's where your truck is right now, right in front of the tower?

A. Yeah, somebody had brought the truck over there. Originally we were over this way.

Q. You were more north?

A. More north, away from it.

Q. By the pedestrian bridge?

A. Away from it, yes.

Q. The pedestrian bridge?

A. Exactly.

But me they brought our rig right in front of the building. I said, "Bullshit." We're not going to" --

(Interruption.)

A. So the chief was telling me, "Leave this rig here and supply this."

(Interruption.)

A. I was in the rig. The chief was ordering me to hook up to the Siamese. I said, "Bullshit. I'm getting out of here." He kept ordering me. I pulled out and put our rig right back where it was originally.

At that time getting out of the rig -- I told the proby, "You stay here. Don't go over there." Now there's more people jumping, more chaos. But you start hearing this cracking noise and thundering noise.

At that time I witnessed Mayor Giuliani and his entourage coming down.

Q. From the south end?

A. No, from this end over here, coming down.

Q. They were coming down West Side Highway?

A. West Side Highway.

Q. South?

A. He gets out of his car. There's about ten of them. They're right where my rig is.

At that time you hear all this crackling and thundering noise. We look up, and you see the first building, the south tower, coming down. I said, "Oh, shit. It's falling."

At that time, Giuliani, his crew and myself, we were running. We were running neck and neck out of there. I just ran as far north as I could, looking back, seeing a massive cloud of smoke and debris just coming my way. I went to one or another street, ran up to that street. Went to another street, ran up that -- I just kept running.

At this time I ran over to where the water was.

Q. Was proby with you, the one that was in the truck?

A. No, he wasn't with me. I don't know what happened to him. At that point I just ran. He may have started with me and we got lost in the run. I don't know what happened to him. But I just ran. We all just ran. I just started running until I got over to where the water was. I said, well, if push comes to shove, I'll just go into the water.

Q. So you ran north and then you ran west?

A. Right, because you're running back this way and zigzagging to where -- this must be the water here. All the way over here.

Q. You went to Vesey and North End Street?

A. Right, right. I remember Vesey.

And there was a school here right by the water, and they were saying that they had a report of a gas leak, some sort of gas leak and to get out of there, evacuate. So I had to run again back over this way.

Now I'm saying to myself, my guys are in there. So I'm on the radio, "39 chauffeur to 39, 39," calling the officer.

Q. Channel 1 you were on?

A. Channel 1. I get no response, no

response at all. But I'm hearing radio contacts. I'm hearing maydays. But he's not responding to me. I said, "Oh, shit. The good guys in that building, they're dead." That's the only thing I could say, these guys are dead.

I said let me get closer. Now I'm working my way back to where my rig is, and I'm on the radio calling, "39 chauffeur to 39. 39 chauffeur to 39 control." Then it got to the point I said, "39 chauffeur to 39 anybody. Anybody 39 respond, respond. Let me hear from you." No one is saying anything.

I'm walking back to the rig. Say my rig is right here, in this area here. When I get about within a block range of it, now you hear this cracking again, this thunder again. You know from the first one, hey, this thing is coming down.

You look up, and now it's coming and coming at a rapid -- it's just falling. Now I start running again, but this time, being that I'm closer to the north tower, it's coming down with such a force. Debris and everything is coming.

There's another fireman to the right of me. Him and I are running. I'm right by PS 89. I remember the school, PS 89. There was a cop waving us in, "Come on in here. Come on in here." I'm saying to myself I'm not going to make it because I have on my full gear. I have full gear on. I seen this wave coming, I'm heading this way, and it's coming like a tidal wave just coming. I said, shit, I'm not going to make this.

There are a couple police cars and a police emergency van, and I just said, "Please, God, let this door be open." When I pulled the door, it opened. I looked like George jumping in the air and closing the door behind me. When I closed this door, it gets covered. It just covers it.

Q. The dust cloud?

A. The dust cloud. It got so black --

Q. You're still on the West Side Highway; right?

A. Still on the West Side Highway.

Q. North of the pedestrian bridge, by Murray, you think?

A. Wherever PS 89 is. I was right alongside PS 89, that street. That may be somewhere in this vicinity right here.

Q. Vesey?

A. Vesey. Wherever the school is. The school was PS 89. The police vehicles were lined up along there.

It got so black, I'm saying, either two things, either I'm dead or it's the end of the world. I've never seen it that black in my whole -- I'm 51 years old. I've never seen it that black in my whole life. I'm saying, well, I don't think I'm dead.

Now I'm worried about being able to breathe. I was okay inside. I was able to breathe. There was no debris coming in or anything.

Q. You heard all that stuff hitting the truck?

A. It was just like a [sound] and it just covered.

At that time maybe about 15, 20 minutes or so, I hear the police, "Hey, is anybody in there?" "I'm in here. I'm in here." They

started working the doors and pushed and got the door open, and I got out. They said, "Are you all right?"

Q. You were trapped inside the ESU truck?

A. The ESU truck.

Q. You couldn't get out?

A. I'm not going to say I couldn't get out, but they helped me get out. At the time I didn't really try to get out. I was just waiting to see if everything clears up.

They came and said, "Is there anybody else you have in here?" They got the door open and got me out. At that time they said, "Are you all right? Do you want to go to the hospital or something? Do you want to get checked out?" I said, "No, I'm all right."

I said, "But there was another fireman with me. How did he do?" They said, "Well, we don't know about the other guy. We don't think he made it." I got his helmet. He was from 1 Engine, and his helmet was 845.

Now I'm calling the guys. I'm frantic, panicking. I'm calling the guys, "39 chauffeur to 39, anybody." Now I know these guys are dead

now, because the second one came down, the north tower. No one was responding. As usual the maydays were going all over the place. It was just major chaos.

This goes on for about a couple hours. I'm walking around, just trying to find my guys, calling, calling, no one responding. I saw other guys looking for their guys. You hear major, major chaos, major maydays, everything. It's just a ball of confusion.

About two hours go by. I ran into John Drumm, who was in the engine that day. I said, "Drumm, where's" -- I'm hugging him. I said, "Where are the guys? What happened? Where are the guys? Where are the guys?" He said, "Man, they were behind me." I said, "There's nobody here but you." He said, "Well, those guys were behind me. I don't think they made it." I said, "Oh, man."

He wanted to go back in. I said, "No, you stay out here. You stay out here with me." So him and I walked, and we ran into a member of 16.

Q. What was that person's name?

A. Then I ran into Rattazzi from Ladder 16, from 16 Truck. I said, "Rattazzi, where are the guys at?" He said, "I don't know where the guys are at." He got separated from his guys.

So the three of us together -- he was suffering with eye injuries. So we made it away from -- we walked up from it, and some EMS guys came over and washed his eyes out and they washed mine out, the same with Drumm.

Drumm kept insisting on going back over. "Can I look for the guys?" I said, "No, you're not going to look for the guys. Let's go over here and get ourselves together." He was all dirty, the debris and everything on him.

We called on the radio. Now Drumm has a radio also. He mentioned that some guys were on Channel 7. I said, "All right. I'll keep it on 1. You turn to 7. Let's call, see if we can hear something." To no avail.

Then they said some guys were on Channel 3. So we switched it from 7 to 3. I stayed on 1, and he switched from 3 to 7 or vice versa. Anyhow, now it's like five hours go by, and I just accepted the fact that these guys are

gone. That's just my account on it.

I ran into Joe Graziano from 13 Truck. He's looking for his guys. I run into Lieutenant Jones from 7 Truck, and he's looking for his guys. I said, well, let me just walk back down there.

I'm where the chief ordered 6 Truck to go after 39, looking for 39, go after them. I said, good, let me stay with 6 Truck and see if I find them maybe I'll hear something. I made it back down there. "6 Truck," I'm calling, "6 Truck." They're not responding back to me.

Finally one of the officers from 6 Truck responds back to me, "Did you see anybody from 39? Negative. I haven't seen anyone yet." About maybe a half an hour this is going on. Now his unit is told to come out of there.

So I'm calling him. He doesn't respond. But the officer from 16 Truck, Lieutenant Williams -- he said, "Arthur" -- I said, "Lou, anybody from 39? Did anybody see anybody from 39?" No one knew. As soon as we hear something, we'll get back to you.

Now I see Chief Schildhorn from the

10th Battalion. I go over there. "Chief, any word on 39?" He said, "No, Arthur, no word." "Did you hear from anybody? Did any of the guys call?" He said, "No, we haven't heard anything." All right. Now I'm just saying these guys are dead. We all came down together. I'm crying.

The sweetest voice that ever came in my life I heard, Jeff Coniglio and Jimmy Efthimiades. I hear, "Arthur. Arthur." I'm looking at these guys in amazement. They're all covered up and everything. I said, "Get over here, you mother fuckers." I was running over, and the three of us were standing right by the command post hugging and crying. I was just so glad to see these guys.

Right behind them was Jimmy Bacon. He was right behind. I said, "Get over here, man. How are you feeling? Didn't you fucking hear me calling you?" It was like seeing my own kids being lost and then I found them.

We were just standing there crying. I said, "Where is McGlynn, man? Where is McGlynn, the officer? Where is Lieutenant McGlynn?" They said, "He's inside helping with the evacuation."

I said, "What the fuck are you doing in there, man?"

So I called him on the radio. He didn't respond right away. I said, "I thought you said he was all right?" "No, Arthur, he's all right." I said, "You guys all right?" They were complaining about eye injuries.

So we made it over where EMS was. They were telling everybody to go over that way, get away from the main body of debris. EMS guys took the post and everything. Jeffrey and Jimmy Efthimiades, they both went to the hospital.

I said, "Look, I'm going to call and let the families know you guys are all right." What I did was I made it back to PS 89 and I called back here to the firehouse. I said, "Listen, there should be a captain there, Savarese. The lieutenant made captain, Savarese." I said, "Captain, listen, just let the guys' families know everybody from 39 is all right."

I knew Lieutenant Williams from 16 Truck was all right. I heard Oscar, who was the chauffeur from 16 Truck named Steve Wright, who

was the roof man, if I'm not mistaken, and Rattazzi. Those guys I knew were all right.

The other guys, Bobby Dana and Kenny Rogers, I didn't know if those guys were all right. So I didn't want to say, well, everybody from 16; I said everybody from 39 is all right. Let the family members know.

At that point we made it back over to -- I left Jeffrey and Jimmy, and I came back over to some staging area they had by either Stuyvesant school -- one of the schools, and saw some of the other guys.

They said, "Listen, go over there and tell them where you were at and give account of what happened," which is what I did. They were seeing who was accounted for. They said, "You have to write down your engine company and your name." They were trying to get who was still here. That's what I did.

Then I saw the rest of my guys from 39, Lieutenant (inaudible). I said, "Where are the guys?" He said, "Over here." I said, "Where is Lieutenant McGlynn?" They said, "McGlynn is over there."

So I just made it over there, got him, hugged him and everything.

It was a hell of an experience. I never want to go through that again, never. Nothing I ever saw before in my life. Just seeing the people jumping was just in itself -- the tower coming down was one thing. Seeing these people jump to their death was so all by itself.

That was it for me. We all came back. I came back with 16 Truck.

Q. You were there until late that night?

A. Late that night. We didn't leave out of there until around 8:00. We got there around 9:30, 25 to 10. We left after the first plane hit. No later than 20 to 10, we were down there. As soon as I got up, we went down and over to Second Avenue and just shot straight down there. When I got over to Houston, I was on the ongoing side traffic. I said I've got to get over to the west side quick and down to the site.

Q. I would like to thank you for participating in this interview, Arthur.

MR. CUNDARI: This concludes the tape,

and the time is 12:35.

File No. 9110063

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER VINCENT FIORENTINO

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

V. FIORENTINO

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is October 12, 2001. The time is 10 o'clock. This is George Cundari and Murray Murad with the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

A. Vincent Fiorentino, Firefighter first grade. 42 Battalion.

Q. We are at 8653 18 Avenue, Battalion 42. Can you please tell us the events that happened regarding the September 11 tragedy?

A. We were in the kitchen in the morning watching Channel 5 news. They were giving a report about the primary election and the camera swung over and showed the first building, the fire and they said plane, we thought small plane, something like that. The Chief and I came up to the office, figuring that we were going to go pretty quick. We took extra lights, put them on the rig and we didn't immediately go. Took the 40 and 48 first from our end of Brooklyn.

Q. What Chief was that?

A. What Chiefs went?

Q. Who was the Chief?

V. FIORENTINO

A. Chief Coyne.

Q. Then we got our ticket at 910 to relocate to the 32. En route with that, we got changed to a third alarm assignment for the Battery Tunnel, Brooklyn side. When we got to there, we were told by Brooklyn that the 42 and the 41 were going to -- we were pulled back to Brooklyn and we had our complete third alarm assignment at the tunnel. With that, at some point Brooklyn took units off of our ticket and they were getting another box, another Manhattan box, an Albany Street box I believe it was. A few of them, I know 201 was one of those numbers on that that was taken off. They went through the tunnel ahead of us. That was right before the first collapse. 201 was caught in that collapse. I believe 113 was also in that group that was taken out of our group and they back filled the assignment and when the first collapse came, the reports at the tunnel were that the tunnel collapsed or that there was a collapse at the other end of the tunnel and we were trying to get confirmation from the tunnel people as to what was happening. They were kind of vague with that.

The Chief assigned a couple of units to assist in the evacuation of the tunnel and prior to

V. FIORENTINO

that we were -- I was on the radio with Brooklyn and we were right at the toll plaza where there was still traffic coming out of Manhattan and our guys were grouped together standing and I didn't see the building come down, but by looking at them I realized what was happening with the first tower. Then we were ordered by orders of Chief Cruthers, to take the entire assignment and go to the Brooklyn Bridge. That's what we proceeded to do. We left those other units there, I know 102 was one of them. They went into the tunnel to assist the people coming out of the tunnel.

Then we went to the Brooklyn Bridge and then we were stopped at the Brooklyn Bridge and they had a report that the other side was possibly untenable and the 42 Battalion went alone, left the rest of the assignment behind as a scout unit to check. We saw that Chambers Street was clear. We reported back to Brooklyn and the rest of the third alarm assignment came over with us. From there we reported in to the command post that was at Park Row and Broadway.

Q. Around City Hall?

A. At the point of City Hall park. We met Chief Haring there. We were assigned to work with the 15th Division, I think it was, and we went and operated in

V. FIORENTINO

number 5 World Trade Center. We assisted in the removal of 3 people from the concourse area. One guy who had an I beam on him in the bottom of this number 5 building. We finished that operation, then that building was on fire.

Q. Where was your Battalion car parked?

A. We parked right along City Hall park.

Q. Then you walked over to --

A. We walked to the command post, then we walked up Vesey Street.

Q. At this time was the tower still standing one of them or both were down?

A. I think they both were down. I mean it was like a wind storm of paper and dust, which I understand they said it was generated by that. It wasn't a windy day. We operated there and then we operated on the fire in number 5 and then later we swung around and we were at a sub cellar fire at the Bankers Trust building; 130 Liberty. We operated in 130 Liberty.

Q. Do you recall who was in that building?

A. What companies?

Q. Yes, Chief or anyone in there?

A. There were other Chiefs there that that --
21, 43 and 42 and we were gathering up guys that had

V. FIORENTINO

cylinders that were able to go down because it was pushing from this sub cellar. So there was a lot of guys at that point that was later on, but a lot of guys didn't have masks. The Chief stopped guys from assisting us further down the stairs without the masks. We made one push, we expended our masks, everybody came out and then they went hunting down more cylinders. They found more cylinders and we went down with a second push and put those fires out down there. After that we were on the pile of number 2.

Q. Doing a search?

A. Right, that's how we operated, to the best of my knowledge. Time frames and all, I don't know. To me it seemed like all one big -- it was nighttime and when we started out it was morning. It went by very quickly in that vein of things.

Q. Which channel were you operating on, Channel 1?

A. When we got over to Manhattan we were told to switch to Manhattan. We switched to Manhattan and the Chief stayed on 1 and I switched mine, I think it was to 5 and both radios had a lot of Maydays. When we first came over there were a lot of Mayday calls, but you couldn't really know where they were all coming

V. FIORENTINO

from. Then the radio quieted down after that, at least the channels we were on.

Q. Initially it came in as a third alarm?

A. We went to a third alarm staging. They do that when they have a large fire somewhere. They bring units from other boroughs to be ready to go in for the next wave. That's basically the best I can remember.

Q. You had a lot of people passing you on the streets, a lot of civilians going, trying to get out of there when you got there?

A. When we hit the corner of Church and Chambers, we ran into two firemen that were totally disoriented and had lost their company, lost contact with their company. They were -- best description shell shocked. We took their names and we told them to continue heading more towards midtown to get out of the storm.

Like I said, the paperwork that we had anything written on disappeared. We came back to our car later in the night. It was filled with about 25 pairs of shoes, jackets. A lot of things were taken from the car, but there were no -- we had our masks with us. The guys wanted to take our masks when we were responding. We had to to like -- that's about it.

V. FIORENTINO

MR. CUNDARI: Thank you for giving this
interview. The time is 1010. This is the
conclusion of the tape.

File No. 9110067

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER VINCENT BUONOCORE

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CASTORINA: This is Ron Castorina conducting an interview with Vincent Buonocore, firefighter two, assigned to Engine 278. The time now is 1325 hours. Conducting the interview with me is --

MR. McCOURT: Tom McCourt.

MR. CASTORINA: And your name, sir?

FIREFIGHTER BUONOCORE: Firefighter Vincent Buonocore, grade two. I had the nozzle that day, assigned to 278.

MR. CASTORINA: The day of September 11th?

FIREFIGHTER BUONOCORE: Yes.

Q. Can you tell me what your assignment was for that day and whatever you can remember?

A. Yeah. I was assigned the nozzle that day. I remember walking into the kitchen and seeing one of the twin towers, smoke bellowing out of the upper floors. They said there was an airplane crash. I said to myself, it was such a beautiful day, I said, how the hell could someone not see that and avoid the twin towers.

A few minutes later I was watching the TV, and I saw the airplane coming from the right

side of the television screen, and one second later I saw the big explosion. All the guys were in the kitchen, and everybody was going, "Oh." Everybody was screaming.

There were two guys outside, Firefighter Jackson and Firefighter Zechewytz. They were outside looking at the sky. Firefighter Jackson said, "Wow, look at this airplane. It's flying so low." Maybe a minute after that they heard us screaming in the kitchen. They ran back, and sure enough, that was probably the plane that crashed into the twin towers.

Once that second plane hit, pretty much I knew we were going. I remember calling my wife, just letting her know that I was going to the twin towers, because I knew at that point it was terrorism. I didn't know the outcome of the day for anybody, so I just wanted to call my wife anyway just to let her know.

We responded. I remember going down Fourth Avenue, heading towards the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, and I remember seeing papers flying in the air. Pretty much we went onto

Third Avenue. We were lining up on the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, waiting for orders from I guess the dispatcher or whatever.

We were hanging out there for about 15 minutes. I was talking to Firefighter Zechewytz. The next thing you know, I saw what I imagine the south tower coming down. Right then and there I pretty much knew it was going to be devastating to the department and to a lot of people.

At that point pretty much we started gathering up -- we lined up then. We took the rig from there, and we were going over the Brooklyn Bridge. We stopped on the bridge for about five or ten minutes, and we were watching all the people coming off from the Manhattan side, thousands of people, walking calmly. Pretty much a few minutes after that we went into Manhattan.

I was pretty happy we didn't go through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel because the only thing that was running through my mind is they're going to hit the tunnel. I didn't want to get caught in there. I was just happy we took the bridge, not knowing that, who knows, if another

airplane was going to be coming crashing into the bridge or what.

We ended up going into Manhattan. It was just ash all over the place. I don't remember which street exactly we were on. Pretty much we parked our rig, and we went to the command center. We stood there for a little while waiting for orders.

Q. Where were you when the second building collapsed?

A. We were, I believe, on --

Q. You were in Manhattan at that time?

A. Yeah, we were in Manhattan. Again, we were by the command center, waiting for instructions.

Q. So you were in the staging area?

A. We were in the staging area. Then I remember just seeing a whole bunch of dust going up again in smoke, not realizing that that was the second tower coming down.

That's the recollections that I have.

Q. Anything you want to add?

A. Basically it was a tragic day for our nation and our department, and hopefully

something like this never goes on again.

Q. Okay. Thank you.

MR. CASTORINA: The time now is 1330
hours. That concludes the interview.

File No. 9110068

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

Firefighter Richard VETLAND

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

VETLAND

MR. CASTORINA: I am here with
Firefighter Richard VETLAND. I am at Engine
278. The time now is 1310 hours. Conducting
the interview with me is?

MR. MC COURT: Tom McCourt.

MR. CASTORINA: And your name, sir?

A. Richard VETLAND, Engine 278.

Q. What is your rank?

A. Firefighter first grade.

Q. What was your assignment on September 11,
2001?

A. I was the chauffeur.

Q. Of?

A. The night tour and the day tour.

Q. Of 278?

A. Engine 278.

Q. Can you recall what happened that day, in
detail?

A. Yes. I actually watched it on TV. The
Chief went first.

Q. Which Chief was that?

A. Ed Henry. Actually, Roger Jackson was
driving him, but John Picarello came in early and

VETLAND

took the run in. They went before nine. Then the rest of the us in the Engine we just had a feeling we were going. We watched it on TV and then watched the second plane hit and knew we were going. We I fueled the rig up, then we went.

We went down Fourth Avenue, to Third Avenue, over the bridge, then they stopped us at the tunnel and there was a staging area at the tunnel. Then when the first building came down we had a clear looking right at us.

Q. You were at the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel?

A. We were at the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.

Q. You didn't get into Manhattan through the tunnel?

A. They stopped us there because 228 had said they thought a bomb went off in the tunnel actually.

Q. And they were in the tunnel?

A. They were in the tunnel. That was during the first collapse, because we seen it. They stopped us before that just to slow everybody down, I think. And then once that came down, that's when 228 said they thought there was a bomb. It was just smoke. But we were stopped before that.

Then we went to --

VETLAND

Q. What route did you take to get into Manhattan? You went over the bridge?

A. Then we went over to the Brooklyn bridge. We took the Brooklyn Bridge. We were the first ones over the Brooklyn Bridge from that staging area at the tunnel. Then we went over and parked on West Street, on the wrong side of West Street, facing towards everything. Facing south on the east side, facing the wrong way.

Q. Just put an X on the map where you were parked on that day, Engine 278.

A. We were parked right here (indicating).

Q. Had the second building collapsed yet at this point?

A. I don't know when it collapsed. There was a lot of dust, a lot of dust. I don't know where we were.

Q. Do you remember, were you directed anywhere or --

A. From there they just put us in a staging area.

Q. Do you know who put you in the staging area?

A. No, that I don't know. We were there

VETLAND

maybe -- we were there maybe about 15, 20 minutes and Father John came up and I talked to Father John. I talked to another guy. I know John Leanza from 122 truck. He was -- I know him from when we were kids and all he told me was "I hugged the columns like they told us in PS 30 and he was hugging the columns there and he said they lost I think two or three guys that he were standing with. He ran over and hugged the column and he came out -- he came walking out, Father John came walking out and just everybody started to come out. It was maybe 15, 20 minutes when people started walking, walking towards us.

So eventually -- actually we parked in and we started to go in and then they grabbed us and pulled us back. We left our rig a lot closer than where they made us go. So I pulled in and I drove right in up over here somewhere close and then they walked us back to the staging area. We basically unloaded food and oranges and stuff all day and then we went to Millennium later on. That was later on in the day.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. I can't think of anything.

VETLAND

Q. Okay. Fine.

MR. CASTORINA: That concludes this
interview. The time is 1315 hours.

File No. 9110080

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL WERNICK

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Wernick

MR. FEILER: Today's date is October 12, 2001. The time now is 1027 hours and this is Monte Feiler of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual. Please state your name, rank and area of command.

A. My name is Michael Wernick. I am from Ladder 9, I am a chauffeur. I was a chauffeur that day.

Q. Firefighter?

A. Firefighter.

MR. FEILER: Of the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting the interview at the Lieutenant's office located at the quarters of Ladder 9, Engine 33, regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Also present is?

MS. QUEVEDO: Fabiola Quevedo of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

Q. What I basically need from you, sir, is just a scenario of what happened when you got the first alarm until the events surrounding the collapse of the second tower. Go ahead.

Wernick

A. That morning we pulled up and I was the chauffeur and positioned the rig -- looking at this map -- on Church Street, right behind Saint Paul's Cemetery. From there we got all the guys and then we went into the north 1 World Trade Center. Enroute there, lots of debris along Vesey Street and we entered 1 World Trade Center. We gathered in the lobby and we proceeded to go up the stairs as a group and as we were going up the steps -- over time, we got separated in the stairwell and some of us stopped at different floors.

Mike Maguire and I stopped at the 12th floor and we stopped at the 27th floor. It was really the 27th floor was the highest level we attained on that day. We took a rest on that floor. We saw various companies. Some of the members, after thinking about it after a while, I did see 6 Truck on that floor.

Q. Were you able to recognize any of the firefighters?

A. None of the firefighters. But I do remember Captain Burke, Billy Burke, he's still missing. And then I do remember the 6 Truck, a couple of the guys recognized me. I saw them last

Wernick

week. They said, oh, you were the guy lying on the floor. And his mask was next to mine, this guy sal, form Ladder 6.

We were there resting five, ten minutes. We heard reports that possibly more planes were coming in our direction and that was from the FBI. And there was Battalion Chief on the floor.

Q. Do you know who that was?

A. I'm trying to think who it was. I think it was from Battalion 2.

Q. You don't know his name?

A. No. And at that point we heard a loud noise and the building shook. It was like a rag doll. At that point we said, "We got hit by another plane." The indications were really poor at that point.

And then the Chief basically said, start filtering down. So we decided to go down rather than up. We went down one stairwell, I think it was C, and we caught up with my boss, Lieutenant Smith at that point and then around the 11th floor, it was clogged up at around the 11th floor in that stairwell, and someone on the 11th floor grabbed us and said go down another stairwell.

Wernick

Q. What was it clogged up with? Civilians?

A. Both firemen and civilians. And at that point it was actually quite lucky that we went to another stairwell that was empty and then we made it down to about the 5th or 6th floor and I remember seeing Lieutenant Desperito because he used to be in 9 truck. I ran into him on that floor. That was a very vivid moment in the stairwell, because he was helping somebody out.

Q. A civilian?

A. A civilian. And I think we passed 6 Truck. They were in the stairwell with civilians as well. Mostly firemen at that point. There really was very few civilians. I remember seeing Engine 5 somewhere along the way. We made our way down to the lobby which was blown out at the time from the debris of the first tower that came down, the south tower that went down.

At that time we still didn't know that the building collapsed. We were still unaware. We thought we either got hit with a plane or that thought it might have been a partial collapse from the upper floors in our building. We got into the lobby and the lobby was completely blown out. I

Wernick

guess from the debris, and we had to climb out there. And as we left the building we still didn't know the first tower collapsed. No clue that that first tower collapsed.

We made our way to the street and about 45 seconds out of the building the north tower collapsed. So we just made it out. We got blown up the West Side Highway, most of us, and --

Q. Who was in that group with you when you left the building?

A. I think I was with B.J. Casey, a fireman from Ladder 9. I don't remember if Casey -- I think Casey was from Ladder 9 and Mike Maguire.

Q. B.J. and Casey, those are nicknames or --

A. Firefighter Springstead and firefighter Casey and Firefighter Maguire.

Q. Okay.

A. I think in the lobby I remember seeing Firefighter Walz and Baptiste.

Q. All from your company or --

A. Neither of them made it out.

Q. And that was 1 World Trade Center you were in?

A. The north tower. And then we sort of made

Wernick

it up the West Side Highway. Well, we walked out to the West Side Highway. The minute we did that the building came down and that blew us a few feet.

From there on, you know, we had a lot of debris in our eyes and face and we couldn't breathe. Eventually I got up, walked around in a dust field and eventually I was taken to Beth Israel Hospital.

Q. I just want to know, when you first got the run, you said you were the chauffeur. Did you receive any specific instructions on where to stage or where to go?

A. No.

Q. The alarm just came in of what, as far as you are aware?

A. Well, actually when it came in Engine 33 went first. They were like 9, 10 minutes ahead of us and then what typically happens in the city is when something comes in they wait for 9:00 o'clock. You know, the dispatchers, because it all has to do with money and overtime. So at 9:00 o'clock the alarm went in for us. So then we proceeded down, I guess it was on the fifth alarm at that point, with no indication of where we were gonna go. I knew we were going to the World Trade Center. You could see

Wernick

the hole in the building right out here on Lafayette Street.

Q. So the first plane had struck, the second plane hadn't struck when you were responding?

A. Right.

Q. Okay.

A. And then as we were going down there it struck.

Q. Did you see it hit?

A. No, We saw the aftermath.

Q. When you got down there, where did you park? Where did you stop the apparatus?

A. I was going down south on Church Street, against traffic on Church Street and I pulled up right behind St. Paul's Cemetery.

Q. Could you mark that.

A. (Complied with request.)

Instead of going -- normally when we -- Like when we went to the one, we went down the West Side Highway, we pulled up over here. As we pulled out here, there was so much debris, the Lieutenant said, "Just park it over here." So, you know, this cemetery, there was papers flying all over the place, there were engines all over, plane parts,

Wernick

building parts, and then we proceeded to walk down Vesey Street into the north tower.

Q. Okay. Did your Lieutenant receive any instructions from a Captain or a chief on where to go or --

A. We just walked into the lobby and at that point they probably got instructions to go as high as we could climb.

Q. When you entered the lobby, did you treat anybody? Was there any civilians that you needed to treat or any patients that you made contact with?

A. Not at that point, but at that point there were a lot of bodies all around outside. We were dodging bodies to get in.

Q. Were you asked to assist a particular unit, either verbally or by radio?

A. No.

Q. When you exited 1 World Trade Center, do you remember where you exited from?

A. Where we came in, in the northwest corner.

Q. Can you mark that.

A. (Complied with request.)

Q. That's where you entered. And you exited?

A. The same way.

Wernick

Q. You said you made it up to the 27th floor?

A. Yes.

Q. How long do you think it took you to walk up?

A. About a half hour. Twenty minutes, a half hour.

Q. Were there lights, any lights on?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know the status of the elevators in that building? Were they running at that point?

A. When we first pulled -- I do remember when we first came in one elevator was blown out. That was on the main floor. We couldn't use the elevators. I don't know if the other elevators were working. I know that definitely one was blown out.

Q. How about the stand pipes? Were they working?

A. No.

Q. You said you weren't aware of the first building collapse.

A. That's correct. Most of the guys weren't.

Q. Did you have a handy-talkie with you?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know, was it on the private

Wernick

channel? Was it on a Manhattan frequency?

A. Just on the regular channel.

Q. How was communications?

A. It was pretty bad.

Q. At any time were you asked to change to a different frequency?

A. No.

Q. Were you staying on the Manhattan frequency?

A. I stayed on the Manhattan frequency.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important? Any other people that you may have seen that you recognized?

A. I remember Andy Desperito, Lieutenant Burke, I saw Mannie somewhere, Mannie Devalle in the stairwell at one point while I was coming down. It was the 6th or 7th floor. He's from Engine 5.

Q. That was the last you saw of him there?

A. Yes.

Q. What did it look like he was doing at that point?

A. I think they went on the floor. They weren't in the stairwell. I remember the door opening on the floor and they were just like in the

Wernick

lobby of the floor.

Q. That was the C stairway you say?

A. At that point we changed over to B.

Q. That was the one that was less crowded?

A. Yes. But around the 4, 5 or 6 floor it started to get crowded.

Q. Civilians and firefighters?

A. Mostly firefighters. But we were still able to move. But I know that there was no urgency at that point trying to get out of the building. It wasn't like "Let's get the fuck outta here." You know? This thing is coming down. It was like filter down guys and start to get out.

Q. Do you think anyone around you was aware that the other building collapsed?

A. No.

Q. Is there anything else that you think is important that you would like to add?

A. No. That's pretty much it.

MR. FEILER: I want to thank you for spending time with us. It's very important that we get this accomplished. The department is appreciative.

That concludes the interview at 1040

Wernick

hours and this concludes the interview.

File No. 911084

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PETE GUIDETTI

Interview Date: October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. McALLISTER: I'm Kevin McAllister from the office of administration. It's October 12th, 2001. We're on the eighth floor at Fire Department headquarters. It is 9:41 hours, and I'm here with Firefighter Pete Guidetti, who is going to recount his experiences from September 11th.

A. We'll start out I was in Ray Goldbach's office, the executive officer to the fire commission, discussing the things that had to be done that day around the office. Ray got a Nextel message that a plane went into the World Trade Center, and we both more or less thought it might have been a Piper Cub, a Cessna or something like that. We had no idea it was a commercial plane.

With that I look out the window, and I see the World Trade Center, I see the hole, I see the black smoke, and I just yelled for my boss, Commissioner Feehan. He came over. He saw it. He said, "Oh, my God. Let's go."

With that Ray says, "Do you want to come with me?" to Commissioner Feehan. Commissioner Feehan said, "No, I'm going to go

with Pete, my driver. He has all my gear and stuff in the car." Then Ray says, "All right, then I'll come with you." With that Tom Fitzpatrick and Tom McDonald were nearby. They asked Commissioner Feehan if they could come along also. He said absolutely.

I went down into the garage first to get into the car and get it ready for them, and a couple minutes later they came down and they got in the car with me.

Q. All four of them?

A. Four of them, Feehan in the front, McDonald, Ray Goldbach and Fitzpatrick in the back.

We exit the garage. We go over the Brooklyn Bridge. One lane was open and cleared for us. The other two lanes to the right of me were just bumper to bumper cars. I had this one clear shot over the Brooklyn Bridge with no interference of traffic.

Q. Could you see the Trade Center as you were driving over the bridge?

A. I didn't look to see it because, driving kind of fast, my eyes were glued to the

road. If they got glimpses of it -- we saw enough of it initially in Ray's office to know what we were heading into.

My plan of action was to take Chambers Street over to West Street and down West Street to the World Trade Center. Exiting off the Brooklyn Bridge, heading towards Chambers Street, Ray Goldbach said, "Pete, don't take Chambers Street. Make a U turn right here." With that I made the U turn, and now I'm heading past City Hall. With that a police ESU vehicle pulls from Park Row South in front of me. Commissioner Feehan says to follow him. So I got right on his tail and went right down to Broadway.

We got as far as Broadway and Dey Street, at which point I pulled the car half on the sidewalk, half in the street, because of all the people, the emergency apparatus coming in, rigs as well as ambulances and cop cars. So there wasn't an easy way to position the car other than to position it that way.

I popped the trunk. The four of them get out. Commissioner Feehan grabs his helmet and puts his fire coat on. There was a fire coat

in there that I believe Tom McDonald put on, or Fitzpatrick, I'm not sure.

I slammed the trunk down. I turn around and tell the people, "Get out of here. The building's coming down." Why I said that, I don't know. I just really felt strongly about it. Talking to the upper echelon in this job, nobody thought the building was coming down.

Q. So you said you told the people.

A. People. There were people all over the place. People were in a position they just wanted to watch. I said to them, "This building is coming down. Get out of here." A few woman scattered, "Let's get out of here, let's get out of here." People just stayed there. Boom, the second plane hits.

Q. So you're right on Broadway when the second plane hit.

A. Right on Broadway when the second plane hit. Shit and debris flying all over the place, people screaming, running for their lives, myself included. Where I ran, I ran five feet under an awning in front of a store.

When all hell calmed down from that, I

got into the car to reposition the car and get it out of the way. More ambulances were coming in. I went down Broadway to Liberty and made a left on Liberty. I parked the car about 20 or 30 feet off the corner.

Q. You're by yourself?

A. I'm by myself. These four guys -- Feehan, Fitzpatrick, McDonald and Ray Goldbach -- once I slammed that trunk and I turned to tell the people this building is coming down, they were already in motion. They were running down Dey Street.

Q. So you were by yourself when the second plane hit?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. My understanding with them was Feehan went one way, the other three went another way. When you have a mass exodus of people coming at you, it is very easy to see how four people could not stay together and would be separated.

So anyway, after repositioning the car and locking it up, I start heading down Liberty towards 10 and 10, not knowing where the command

post was. I figured let me go and hook up with Feehan -- he's my boss -- in case he needs anything.

I have no gear. I'm LSS. I was never issued bunker gear, helmets or any of that stuff because there's no need for me to have that.

Commissioner Feehan, First Deputy, went to major incidences. Most of the time I never had to take him to third or fourth alarms and things like that. He would let his chief of department run it, his chief of operations. In this particular case he wanted to go to this one, so we took him.

I was just going to go and hook up, try to find him, stay by his side: "Boss, do you want me to go get your phone? A glass of water?" In my capacity as an aide to him.

Q. At the command post?

A. At the command post. Wherever he is. Sometimes he's remote from the command post. If he happens to say, "Yeah, let's take a ride to this third, Pete," we would take a ride. Sometimes he stays in the background and sees how it's going.

My theory was let me go find my boss and see if he needs anything. I was glad to get the car out of the way. I didn't want it to be buried. I didn't want it to be inaccessible or in a position where we couldn't get it out of there should Commissioner Feehan five hours from now from that point want to go back to headquarters, get a change of clothes, whatever. That's what made me get that car out of there also.

So I get that car out of there. I'm heading down Liberty towards Church.

Q. On foot?

A. On foot.

I stop before Church, look up -- this is the second tower that got hit -- and I said, "Pete, don't go any further. This fucking building is coming down." I'm sorry I cursed.

Q. That's okay. This is your recollection, your words and your observation.

A. With that, within two seconds I hear a rumble. I'm still looking up. I didn't do anything. I'm still more or less -- not frozen but I'm standing there in awe how this building

is still staying up.

Q. You're on Liberty. Are you west of Church or east?

A. I'm before Church. I never made it to Church.

Q. You never got --

A. Never made it to Church.

Q. In between Broadway and Church?

A. Between Broadway and Church, looking up.

I stopped. Not that I froze, but I stopped. I said, "This fucking thing is coming down." With that I heard the rumble within a couple of seconds, and then I saw the brown, thick, malted milk dust cloud and smoke and whatever else coming down. It was rolling down with a roar like you couldn't believe.

I turned around and I start fucking running. Everybody's running for their fucking lives. Somebody runs by me, knocks into me, I fall down. The last thing I needed running away from a falling fucking building is to fall down.

But I manage to get up, start running again. By then the building had pancaked down.

The force of it just hit me in the back and blew me like ten feet into a police van.

Q. Was it just the air, the force of the air? The debris?

A. Air, dust, dirt, debris. Not heavy debris. It felt like I was shot in the back with a shotgun, pellets. All these pellets were hitting me, the force. The dust engulfed me, pushed me, literally -- I guess I was off my feet for ten feet. Then I banged into the police van, dropped down to the floor, scrambled to get around the building that was on the corner for protection.

Q. Now you're on Broadway and Liberty, do you think?

A. Yes.

Now I can't see anything. I'm huddling on my knees. I'm trying to feel if I'm bleeding, because I am on blood thinners.

Q. Did you hear anything at that point?

A. A lot of screaming, a lot of screaming. I was a little disoriented. I couldn't see anything. I was in the thick of it as far as the dust cloud was concerned. Day turned into night,

literally.

I started wandering, not knowing where I was heading, because I couldn't see street signs, I couldn't zero in on what fucking street I was on. But anyway I was heading east towards the seaport.

Q. Okay.

A. Midway in that trip from the west side to the east side, I hear more planes coming. I did not know it was our jet fighters. That was told to me later on by Dr. Hittman.

Q. Okay.

A. I just huddled up against the side of the building. There's no place to hide. You couldn't see anything. There is a building there; that I can determine. I just stayed up against it while I thought there was another plane coming in. But it wasn't. It was our jet fighters. That went overhead. I continued to walk.

I get to the seaport. That must be Water Street there.

Q. Yeah.

A. I see the blue sky for the first time.

So I start walking north. Somebody gave me a bottle of water. All I can remember saying to myself is, "I can't find Feehan. I can't find Feehan. They're all dead. They're all dead," meaning the four I took.

Q. Yeah, sure.

A. I look up at the Brooklyn Bridge, loaded with people, mass exodus coming out of fucking Manhattan.

Q. On foot?

A. On foot.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I keep walking, keep walking. I walked to the Manhattan Bridge, which had less people on it. Naturally people are going to go for the nearest thing that they can get out of the borough.

Q. Sure.

A. So the Manhattan Bridge wasn't bad to walk over. I got to the Manhattan Bridge, walked over.

Q. Did the second building come down while

you were there?

A. The second building had come down when I was midway -- I wouldn't even say midway. I would say after I started -- after I regained some composure, got off my knees from this huddled position, I started walking. Then the second building came down.

Q. This is before you got to the Manhattan Bridge?

A. Oh, way before. Way before I saw the blue sky.

Q. Okay.

A. Then as I'm walking up to the Manhattan Bridge, there was a car bomb. A car bomb went off in some car, because the cops were saying, "Come on, people, shit is happening. Let's go. Keep moving, keep moving."

You could see another plume of smoke. Somebody yelled, "It's a car bomb, a car bomb." I kept fucking walking towards the Manhattan Bridge. I got over the Manhattan Bridge. Some heavyside black lady just put her arm around me and walked with me and just talked to me and said everything's going to be all right and you'll be

okay.

I don't think I looked too good from --

Q. I saw you when you returned. I was at headquarters when you returned, and you were covered in dust and you were clearly disoriented and we got an EMT to look after you.

A. That I remember, yeah. They were very nice. I was sitting up front at Corey's desk. I know I had been crying a lot. I really thought all four of them were dead.

Basically they calmed me down. They told me I had to go and decontaminate in the shower, get rid of all the clothes. I got some spare clothes from Roy Katz, and I went and took the shower. Then they said, "You should go in for debriefing." That was on the seventh floor, I believe [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So I go. I get off and go on the seventh floor. I come in an office like this, a room like this. I sit at the head. There's six people: a marshal, a couple of EMTs, Ken Cox, a couple other people. I sit down. This one EMT

says, "If you want to talk, you can talk. If you don't want to, you don't have to. Whenever you feel like it, you can talk if you like or whatever."

I'm just sitting there. Then there was quiet. There was silence. They're all staring at me, six people staring at me. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So the EMT girl says, "Okay.

That's perfectly okay if you just want to sit a while."

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] "Okay. That's fine. If you want to come back later, you're more than welcome to. We're here to help you. We're here." I understood all that, but maybe had they asked me questions I would have been responsive to each question rather than six people staring at me, waiting for me to start talking.

Q. Right.

A. I didn't want to relive what I just did, what I just experienced, at that time. I'm doing it now, and I've done it quite a few times in telling friends and loved ones what I

experienced. At that time with six people staring at me, I said, "You know what, I want to go upstairs." And they let me go upstairs.

I just went back to my office. I sat down. One of the light duty guys got me a glass of water. Basically that was it. I stood around until around 4:00, I believe it was, 3:30. Then when I had the moment, I just left without saying anything to anybody, and I got in my old pickup truck and I headed home. That's all I wanted to do was go home.

Q. Sure.

A. [REDACTED]

The next day I didn't come to work. Ray called me at home. A couple of people called me at home [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Q. Sure.

A. I said, "I've got to go back to work. I can't do this. I can never not go back." So the very next day I came in.

Basically I would say that's the whole thing in a nutshell. Was I as close to the

building as a lot of people were? Absolutely not. I was out of harm's way. The most that happened to me was the force of air, dust and pieces, tiny pieces, of concrete, plaster that just engulfed me, knocked me to the ground. I got a little scrape on the arm.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q. Yeah. You were disoriented, but it was understandable after what you'd experienced. I saw you that afternoon.

A. Yeah. I felt I had all my faculties but yet something was missing. I couldn't pinpoint it. I wasn't hurting. I wasn't like, "Oh, my shoulder is killing me. My arms are bleeding. I'm cut." No physical pain. I just felt I wasn't right. I knew I wasn't right. Did I think I was in shock? No, again, because, as I said, I made it back here on my own.

What else could I add to it? Other than the fact that I saw one distinguished

jumper; several others, but the position I was in when several others were jumping, I didn't really get a good look at them, but the one I did.

I don't know what more to say other than I don't know what companies were where. I couldn't tell you if Engine 33, which was my company, was on Church and Vesey Street. I couldn't tell you that. It all happened so fast. We got there, the second plane hit within a couple of minutes. That just totally confused all these people even more, as well as myself and I'm sure firefighters and Feehan and the rest of them.

Basically that's it. I didn't see any firefighters get injured. I didn't see any rigs in position that I can say, yeah, Kevin, I remember 33 engine being on the corner of Church and Vesey. As I started to run, there was an empty rig. I didn't see any of that.

Q. Okay.

A. I didn't get close enough.

As far as getting Feehan closer, maybe if I would have went Chambers Street to West, maybe I would have gotten him closer rather than

him have to walk from Broadway and Dey to the command center.

Q. Right.

A. I might have come in the other way and might have gotten him there -- I don't know. These are things I question myself, why did I go so fast.

Q. He made it there on foot. He made it to West Street, and he was on the west side of West Street. So either way -- he didn't get hurt before he got there. He was hurt after he got to the west side of West Street.

A. All right.

Again, I said I think I drove too fast. I got him there too fast. I didn't have some needle, life-saving syringe here that I had to go so fast that we had to get it there. I was taking a 72-year-old man to probably one of the most horrendous things that he would ever see -- had seen in his career or would ever see, had he been still alive. I question myself about that. Maybe if you would have just take it easier a little bit you wouldn't have gotten him there so fast. Ray chimed in with, "Did you ever stop to

think by getting him there that fast he saved 200 lives by giving an order here or giving an order there?"

Q. Right.

A. That kind of made me feel a little bit better. But I do question why wasn't I with him. I normally am in the few times we do go to scenes. Unless it's something like, "Pete, just sit in the car. I'll be back. I'm just going to go check in." Then I would just stay with the car.

But I had this sense of -- I don't know, is it guilt or is it --

Q. Some people describe it as a survivor's guilt.

A. That's what I've been experiencing lately. A couple of times it entered my mind that I was pissed off that I wasn't one of them, which is -- I don't like to even say that. But kind of like -- I don't know. I think the survivors suffer more than the instant impact of death, you know.

I'm assuming and hoping and praying that as Feehan was running as well as all the

other guys that there was a bang on the head, knocked them unconscious and then whatever happened afterwards he didn't feel. That's quick. Okay? That's kind of a quick way of going.

The people who survived that now, that walk away from that, is that survivor's guilt? Is that, "Why wasn't I there too and why wasn't I -- should it be a lot easier if I was fucking dead than to go through life day in and day out like this, questioning?"

Q. Why by an act of fate did I survive and another guy is dead.

A. Right. Oh, yeah.

Q. People are so racked by that.

A. Little things too to make a person not be caught up in that collapse, like Chief Ganci giving Nigro an order, "Go check the side of the building. Tell me what we've got, Dan. Tell Steve Masiello, 'Steve, get me two good trucks over here.'" So those two guys had a direct order. They leave Ganci. They survive. Ganci is dead.

My boss, with three of his close

people, all four going down the block at the same time, same rate of speed, because people coming out and you can only run so fast or walk so fast, they went one way, Feehan went by himself another way. Feehan eventually got to the command post. Where these guys went I'm not too familiar with. I think Ray tried to hook up with the commissioner, rightfully so. Fitzpatrick and McDonald, I don't know where they were headed.

To make a long story short with that particular statement, why Feehan goes this way, these three go that way, these three live, Feehan dies. Feehan goes this way, his aide moves the car this way, starts heading towards hooking up with him, he lives, Feehan dies.

Q. There's no explanation for it. Everybody experienced the same thing, and why one person got hit with something that ended up killing him and another person didn't, I don't know what the explanation is.

A. When you get in that thought process of thinking about all that, you probably just ransack your brain for answers when you can't come up with them. Even discussing it with other

people, nobody is going to say, "Well, this is why" and give you a direct answer. There's probably just a lot of things involved with it.

I don't understand why nobody -- when I say "nobody," the people I spoke to, the upper echelon, your Fitzpatrick, your Ray Goldbach. These are knowledgeable guys. They're fire officers. They told me, "We did not think the building was coming down."

The first words out of my mouth when I slammed that trunk lid was to tell these people, "Get out of here. This building's coming down." I always felt those World Trade towers were a firefighter's nightmare. I always told my wife I do not want to be working when we have a fire in there.

About 20 years ago when I was full duty -- I was full duty for 16 years before I got hurt and became high duty LSS. So about 20 years ago I'm in front of the firehouse. It was a Friday night. I'll never forget this.

Q. In Manhattan?

A. Manhattan, 33 Engine, which is buried under the rubble. I'm standing in front of

quarters. It's the 12 to 3 watch, summer night, beautiful night. A civilian is walking by, stop, he's looking in, the apparatus doors are up. I start talking to him. He turns out to be an architectural engineer. He builds high-rise buildings, skyscrapers.

I said, "Let me ask you a question. Can I ask you a question?" He said, "Yeah, sure." I said, "The World Trade Center --" He says, "Yes." These are my words, Kevin, on my father's grave and my mother's grave. I said, "Let me ask you a question. If a 747 out of Newark topped off with jet fuel crashes into the 80th story of one of the stories, will it topple the top 30 stories?" "Oh, no, it's not designed to do that. It's not designed to do that the way we constructed this. We took things like that into consideration in the building of it. That would not happen."

It didn't topple.

Q. Right, well, that's true.

A. At that time when I ask this guy this question, I'm picturing a plane going in, blowing out loads of floors, fully loaded, 747 I quoted,

topped off with jet fuel, would it topple the 30 stories. He said no.

Did I think when I said that day these buildings are coming down, I didn't think they were going to pancake all the way down. I'm looking up at that second building saying how are those stories above it staying up. The hole was huge. It looked like toothpicks, four toothpicks in the corner were holding the rest of the stories above it up.

In me saying that these buildings are coming down, I thought it was going to collapse, it was going to topple.

Q. From above?

A. From above, like 30 stories, 20.

Whatever was left above the plane crash in either tower would just give way and go this way and come down into the street. I did not think the whole building would pancake down. They were designed, from what I understand, to do that. 20 years ago the guy didn't tell me that. He didn't turn around and say, "Oh, no, you don't have to worry about the building toppling. However, you have a strong possibility of it pancaking down on

itself because it's primarily steel construction. Steel expands one inch for every thousand degrees rise in temperature. So you're popping rivets, you're twisting beams."

But again, he didn't say that. He just said it's not coming down.

Q. And they spoke a lot about impact. Apparently the building was designed to withstand an impact from a 707, which was the plane of the day. But it doesn't appear anybody considered the impact of a fire with all that combustible material added to it.

A. Right, that fireball, that massive amount of jet fuel burning instantly. It all goes instantly.

That's it. I was amazed at why I thought they were coming down, and I was amazed at that question the way I worded it 20 years ago, was the truth. The reason why I used the 747 in asking this guy that question back then was because 747 was the biggest plane we had. Topped off with jet fuel, it's going to have the maximum amount of fuel. Right out of Newark, you're not going to burn much to hit the World

Trade Center.

Q. A flight to Europe or somewhere else.

A. I didn't think of terrorism back then either. I'm just saying an accident, the fog, something, a plane is going to go into the World Trade Center. I'm going to give you a scenario, what do you think, you're an architectural engineer.

So I found that kind of strange as well as that day looking up at them saying they're coming down, saying it to people, saying it to myself with the second one, and then actually seeing it come down, looking up at it as it's starting to come down.

500 feet to the base of the building, maybe, 600 feet, I would say I was, going by the map and the schedule in the map, one inch equals 600 feet, on one of the maps I have. I was trying to find out where I was. I used that. I would say about 600 feet from the base of the building.

Q. Sure.

A. Which to me 110 stories up, it's coming down, is a little too close for me.

Q. Right.

A. If somebody told me, "you want to stand 600 feet away from the base of the World Trade Center when it starts to collapse?" I would say, "Absolutely not. Get me ten fucking blocks away."

But anyway, again, I was out of harm's way, because I wouldn't be here now. It's just, all of it, the hearing of the second plane exploding, people jumping, losing my boss, losing friends, my company's buried, just putting everything all together, I have no words to describe what I feel. I'm sure a lot of people feel most of what I feel. Some feel worse because of being closer, seeing a lot more worse things than I did, like body parts. I really didn't see any body parts. Some people saw that, who witnessed that, who were closer. That company that was in the stairwell, what was it, 6 Truck, 9 Engine.

Q. Yeah.

A. I mean, talk about questioning fate and everything; right?

Basically I guess that's my whole day

that day.

Q. I appreciate that.

A. I don't know if I was of help. I hope I was of help.

Q. Yeah, absolutely. Everybody's recollections are unique, and we appreciate the fact that you shared yours with us.

A. Do you have any specific questions you want to ask like -- I never made it to 10 and 10. The command center wasn't there anyway.

Q. Sure.

A. That's number one, had I gotten there. Had I been a little faster, I probably would have been by 10 and 10 and God knows would I be here now. I don't know.

All these questions you run through your mind. I'm thankful to be alive. I do think my career with the Fire Department is over, after 31 years and losing a boss of 11 years and my company being buried, again, and me coming close to either being killed or seriously injured. I think I want to spend some time with the wife and the family and the grandchildren.

Q. Sure.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So I guess that helps me in the fact
that I wasn't by Feehan's side, because in a
situation like that I don't think anybody who's

[REDACTED] with no equipment and a
short-sleeve shirt should be at the base of a
building that parts of planes are coming down,
debris is coming down, bodies are coming down,
eventually the whole building is coming down.

So maybe I helped my own guilt of not
being next to my boss's side with that. I feel
it's a pretty legitimate excuse, if that's the
word I want to use, "excuse." I don't even know
anymore.

But basically that's it. What else? I
couldn't find Feehan's car. Dismay held the
marshals for days. Then eventually they did find
it.

Q. Yeah.

A. That's it, I guess, Kevin. I don't
know what else.

Q. Okay. That was great.

A. My whole story.

Q. That was very detailed, and that was a good account. I appreciate that.

A. Okay. Thank you. If there's anything else you need, you think of, one single question or something.

Q. Let me wind it up?

MR. McALLISTER: It's 1013 hours on October 12th, 2001, and we're going to conclude the interview now. Thank you.

File No. 9110110

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MAUREEN MC ARDLE-SCHULMAN

Interview Date: October 17, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

McArdle-Schulman

MR. CASTORINA: The time now is 1205.

We are conducting an interview. We are at Engine 35. My name is Ron Castorina. Your name?

MR. MC COURT: Tom McCourt.

MR. CASTORINA: And your name, ma'am?

A. Maureen McArdle-Schulman.

Q. Could you tell me what your assignment is, and your rank?

A. Assigned to Engine 35. I'm a firefighter first grade.

Q. On September 11, 2001, can you tell me on that particular day what the events were, what you can remember?

A. I came in to work for a roster staff tour. Usually on roster staffing you're detailed out if your company doesn't need you.

I was assigned to 91 Engine. I was in our quarters when the first plane hit. We weren't sure if it was a small plane, a big plane.

So I was in the firehouse when the first plane hit. I had the detail out of the house to 91 Engine and I had just got into my car and left. I got into my car and went over to 91 Engine. I parked on the

McArdle-Schulman
side street on 111th Street, walked into the
quarters. I had all my gear in my arms and the
announcement came over that it was a fifth alarm and
91 Engine was responding. It's unusual. It usually
comes over the computer. It came over the
loudspeaker.

I happened to have my cell phone in my hand,
that God. I stuck it in my turnout coat pocket. I
got on the rig and responded to the World Trade
Center. We ended up going through 112th Street,
down to Central Park South. We came out of the park
and we ran into all the other rigs. They were all
responding. Police cars, unmarked cars. It was
like a big caravan down there.

We parked on West Street. You know, basically
we were all in line. Whoever was in front of us
parked in front of us, we parked behind them. We
were on the wrong side of West Street facing the
towers. So the windshield was that way so we were
on the wrong side of the street. We got out of the
rig, got our stuff, carried cylinders, roll-ups,
standpipe kit, all our gear, started huffing down
West Street. I was a little slower than the rest of
them.

McArdle-Schulman

Q. Where were you going? Heading on what street?

A. Heading -- West Street, towards the towers.

Q. At this point did the first collapse occur?

A. No, no collapses. The second plane had hit.

Q. So you just saw the two towers burning?

A. Burning. We went to the command center, the lieutenant reported in. There was already 75 to 100 firefighters standing in this parking garage, at the entrance, waiting for assignments.

Companies were coming out, companies were going in for relief. Somebody yelled something was falling. We didn't know if it was part of an airplane coming out, if it was desks coming out. It turned out it was people and they started coming out one after another.

Q. You saw the jumpers?

A. We saw the jumpers coming. We didn't know what it was at first, but then the first body hit and then after that we knew what it was. And they were just like constant --

McArdle-Schulman

We were lucky most of them hit the set back, they weren't landing on the ground.

Q. How far were you from where they were jumping at this point?

A. I didn't see anyone landing on the ground in front of us. Most of them were hitting the set back. I'm still across the street in the parking lot. Me and another guy from 91 just -- I was getting sick. I felt like I was intruding on a sacrament. They were choosing to die and I was watching them and shouldn't have been so me and another guy turned away and looked at the wall and we could still hear them hit.

The Lieutenant came up to us and said, "We're going in." So we all got our gloves and Scotts back on and went up to the part by the command center, and they said, "We need forcible entry tools." In an engine we don't carry anything but our hose, we have standpipe kits. We had things that we thought we would need. They were sending us to Tower 2, sub-basement 6.

So I called my husband on my cell phone. I said, "I'm going in. This is where I'm going." I left a message on his machine. He wasn't at his

McArdle-Schulman

desk at the time. I was standing there and my Captain, who was at the medical office who just had surgery on his shoulder happened to be there.

"What are you doing here? You're on medical?"

He said, "Nobody's on medical anymore.

Everybody's at the scene."

Okay. So my Captain and the chauffeur from 91 volunteered to go back to 91 to get us some tools we needed, because there was nobody to let us into sub-basement 6 or anyplace else.

So they went to the left. We're standing at the command center, listening to everybody give their positions. You know, what stairway they were using. You know, escape stairway, rescue stairway. Things like that or what floor they're on. We're hearing the whole thing where everybody is.

Someone comes running over to the table and said, "A firefighter was hit by a jumper. He needs last rites." So a couple of guys went to the right to give this guy last rites with Father Judge, I guess. I don't know who else ran over. My Captain and the chauffeur from 91 went to the left. We're standing there and we're looking up and we're trying

McArdle-Schulman

not to look at people jumping. We really felt like we were intruding on them. And the building had red fire, a ring of fire. They started pumping and bouncing and I'm standing there staring. Finally somebody yelled "run." It took everybody out of that trance we were in. We ran back into the garage. Anybody that went to the right was killed. People that went to the left were okay.

Q. Do you remember seeing anybody in particular that ran that way?

A. No.

Q. You don't remember?

A. No. I was just mesmerized, absolutely mesmerized by this building. I couldn't -- we just -- it was like watching people jump. You just can't believe what you're seeing and you're just standing there like idiots staring.

And ran back into the garage -- I mean I didn't run, because I was ahead of the pack. By the time I turned around, it was asses and elbows and I have a really bad sense of direction. That's why I stay in the Engine.

So I moved all the way over to the right and there was a curb and I ran my foot along the curb.

McArdle-Schulman

I still had my roll-up on my shoulder, ran my foot along the curb cause if I get turned around, I don't want to keep walking in the same direction. So I just was walking along with this stuff on my shoulder trying to stay away from the pack because I didn't want to get killed by anybody running and the thing -- I didn't actually watch it come down. It just came down behind me. I was stuck inside the garage and --

Q. That's while you were on the move?

A. Yeah. I was just kind of walking and feeling close with my foot. I didn't want to get lost. And all I kept thinking was this is the garage they blew up last time. You know, you always hear about secondary problems.

So we got in there and pretty much everybody started "Are you okay? Are you okay?" I was feeling around the ground to see if anybody had fallen and then some guy said, "I know how to get out of here." So by now I put my face piece on and it was full of crap. So I sucked in what I now find is asbestos. It was all in my eyes. My eyes were on fire.

This guy says, "I know how to get out of here."

McArdle-Schulman

So we're all like holding on to each other's shirt sleeves and he leads us outside and the guy next to us starts having an asthma attack. So he says, "I need your mask." So I gave him my face piece and me and someone else pulled in a police van with air conditioning on.

And we were outside and except for a piece of a tree that I was standing next to 15 minutes before that, I didn't know where outside was. It was complete black. Everybody had 2 inches of soot on them. It was just you couldn't breathe. You know, we really couldn't breathe.

So afterwards everybody seemed to calm down. I went back into the garage and I started calling for my company that I was with. The Lieutenant found me and one of the guys from 91 found me. We were still missing one member. The Lieutenant said, "Come on. Let's get out of here." They actually took me into the parking garage and through the building and came out like half a block away. They said, "Go to the rig and stay there."

So I went back to the rig with the other guy, the other firefighter. I said, I got a find our other guy. So I went back to the rig, checked the

McArdle-Schulman

rig. The rig was still running. Because that's what they would do, is keep the rig running all the time. The lights were still on. So I said to him, kidding, I said, "Let's move the rig a little further." So he backed up a block and we're standing there waiting for everybody to come. Nobody is coming back and there were people wandering all over.

It was, you know, we all kind of started going back towards grounds zero because we were missing people. We felt like you weren't doing anything standing there. And right now the sun was out and all of a sudden you're hearing, there is a guy dressed in army fatigues with automatic weapons shooting people, that there is four more planes missing.

Q. You're hearing all these rumors?

A. Yes, rumors. There was a guy with a little TV, like a civilian, hooked it up to a building with an outlet. He said, there is eight planes all together and they only found four and, you know, we're getting bomb scares on this building and we're running for our lives.

I said, "Where are we supposed to go?" He

McArdle-Schulman
said, "Go by the water."

Q. And there is supposed to be a guy shooting at you?

A. Yes. "Go by the water at least there is no building there." I said, "But these buildings are so big. If they come down, it doesn't matter." So we went running, not knowing where to go. So finally I get back to the rig and I said, "I got a call my husband." I just called him and told him I was going in the tower. The tower just imploded. So finally I couldn't get a signal on my cell phone. I found a pay phone.

A guy gave me his calling card. The pay phone, he had used it two seconds before. It didn't work for me. So finally I get a hold of my husband. I said, "I'm okay." I must have been hysterical. He said, "Calm down. Calm down." I said, "I'm okay. I made it. I'm all right." Then I called my father, I have two brothers on the job. So I called my father to find out where my brothers were. Both of them already called. I'm one of the few families that lucked out.

Then I went back to the rig again and we were standing there, I'm standing there with this one

McArdle-Schulman

firefighter. We still don't have the Lieutenant back. We're still missing one member. We're standing there and I look up. The second tower starts with the ring of fire. Some puffing and bouncing.

Q. Just like the first one?

A. So he said, "It's going, just like the first one." So I ran to the back of the rig and got on the back step. I still have my gear on, I'm in a fetal position. I was afraid that if I got in the rig that if anything came flying down the street it would go through the windshield and kill me. So I figure I've got the whole rig in front of me. The hose bed is there. Hopefully if I stay down low enough -- he went and ran under a rig, got under a rig and the second building came down. The second building came down.

So the second building came down, I didn't see him for a while. Kind of like I saw him for two seconds and he said, "I gotta find the rest of the guys." And I said, "You know, I'm gonna move the rig again. I'm a little too close." So we actually moved it with him.

Q. So when the second building came down did

McArdle-Schulman

all the rubble and the dirt --

A. Yes. Came right down West Street.

Q. Right up to your rig?

A. Just the way -- just the way it shows in the news. That picture of this cloud coming down the street. That's exactly what happened. So I moved the rig another two blocks away and I turned it around to not face the towers and the other guy kind of saw some people he knew. We still didn't have a Lieutenant. We were still missing one of the guys from 91. The chauffeur from 91 I heard they had taken to the hospital. He had chest pains. I saw my Captain after that. I knew he was okay. So I was walking back and forth. "How close should I get."

All of a sudden building number seven now has twelve stories of fire and I ran into one of my guys, from my company, and from there he told me where the rest of my company was. So I found the rest of my company. And they were in the parking garage, which I didn't know when I saw it if it was the parking garage I had been in earlier.

He said he needed search rope. So I found a rig and I found a search rope and I told them to

McArdle-Schulman
search -- how far the rope went.

So I, you know, I really didn't know what the situation was and 35 Engine had lines on Tower 2. On Tower 1 they were doing some searching and then they pulled everybody out to get away from the scene. So we basically -- I found my Lieutenant, we finally found the missing guy. Everybody in my group was okay. Everybody was accounted for. I told the other Lieutenant, "I'm staying with my own company. You guys are too all over the place for me. I want a company that stays together. My company stays together."

So basically we went back to the rig and by now the recalls were coming down. The bus was stopping right by the rig. Everybody company that got off the bus was taking whatever they could off our rig. You know, tools, whatever. So basically we're standing there. We didn't even have a Scott mask at this point. Everything is gone.

Q. How was your breathing? Were you okay?

A. It was horrible. I had my eyes cleaned out about 12 times.

Q. Did you go to the hospital?

A. No. Somebody left a baseball cap in the

McArdle-Schulman

rig, so I grabbed that, because the sun was killing my eyes. I mean it took about a week and a half before the --

Q. From the dirt.

A. Plus it didn't help. I put the face piece on and I sucked the air in and the whole thing was full with whatever that was and all the crap went into my eyes too. Pretty much that's it. You know, we stayed at the rig the rest of the day, hung out, got water when we could, found a bathroom I could use, which was real important to me, and stayed down and at 9:00 o'clock I finally we all started wandering around and I went down to where the first overpass is and I saw a Captain sitting at the table. And what happened was I heard one of the other female firefighters on the radio and I wanted to find her to find out -- some girlfriend of the Captain of Engine 6 and I knew her company was the first or second through there. So I wanted to see if anybody knew if she was working. So I didn't find --

Q. So you knew your brothers were okay.

A. I knew my two brothers were okay. My brother Kevin, he's in Squad 41. He wasn't working

McArdle-Schulman

so he was in on the recalls. So anybody that came in afterwards was pretty much all right. It was just the initial sign-ins. And I passed his rig.

Q. Where does your other brother work?

A. In Queens. I knew he wouldn't be there unless he was on detail, from 84. Again, I saw the guy, the Captain I knew, he used to be a firefighter on 42 Truck, Charlie, and he said to me, "Oh, my God you're alive. We have you as missing." So I said, "okay."

What happened was there was a big communication problem. They kept calling my house from the battalion to see if anybody heard from us. Because they didn't know who went down. Because with the recall, anybody who was here jumped on the rig.

Q. Right.

A. So everybody went. So, you know, that's why rescue companies lost 10, 12 guys. At a quarter to 9 they grabbed everybody they could and got on the rigs. Pretty much that's it.

MR. CASTORINA: Okay. The time now is 1220. This concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110111

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS HANSARD

Interview Date: October 18, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 18th.

I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force. We're conducting an interview with Firefighter THOMAS HANSARD of Engine 209 at the quarters of Engine 209. The interview is beginning at 1438 hours.

Q. Tom, I just ask you to tell us your story.

A. I was here at work, changing tours. They said that an airplane hit the World Trade Center. We went up on the roof, because from the roof you can see the World Trade.

Q. That's right.

A. We got up on the roof and saw the explosion, not knowing that it was a second plane hitting the World Trade Center. As the explosion came in, the box came in and we responded to the World Trade Center. I had the backup position on the engine, and we went.

We went over -- there was a little bit of traffic on Park Avenue. We got down to the Brooklyn Bridge where we took it quickly, and they had the Brooklyn Bridge wide open for us. No cars, just us and police.

We pulled over and we came across Chambers Street. We came straight down Trinity and we stopped at the corner of Trinity and Liberty, which 217 was parked right on this corner and 230 was on this corner, and we stopped on this corner.

We got out and picked up our equipment, our Scotts and extra air bottles and hose, and we started to walk down Liberty Street towards --

Q. The World Trade Center?

A. -- the tower.

Q. So you were walking west. Okay.

A. As we walked down to the tower, we went to 10 and 10, thinking that that was the command center.

Q. Okay. Right.

A. It wasn't the command center. They told us to go down onto West Street, Liberty and West, which was the command center. So now we walked down the block, and walking on this block there were people waving at us and jumping. We walked through like body parts and all of this stuff on the street, littered on the street. We passed a guy, Suhr, from 216, his helmet and his

stuff was down, and guys took him away.

From there we came down to Washington. Something was in the street there. We cut up Washington, and we went down Cedar, and then we came back up West Street.

Q. You came back around up West. Okay.

A. We were standing right here on this corner, and the lieutenant from 219 was looking for the command post. We stopped right there while he went to check in at the command post when we were standing there.

As we stood there, another member said, "Let's move a little bit," because a lot of stuff was falling on us. We moved about 20 feet. Once we moved that 20 feet, the first tower came down.

Q. You were like right on West Street and Liberty, right there?

A. We were like right here, West Street and Liberty, and we ran across here to in front of the building here, which was like One Federal plaza.

Q. That's the one that the walkway goes across to.

A. Yeah.

Q. Right.

A. The walkway, we were under it and like over here. I don't know where it is. We just ran across the highway or street or whatever it is, and two guys ran into the revolving door but it was locked. I just stood up against the side of the building, and I found a little corner in front of the building, and the building came down.

It started coming down. We ran just there. The building just came down. I stood there. We didn't know what to do or whatever. Then the next thing, the asbestos or whatever was coming and you couldn't breathe, couldn't see.

It just took forever before you could do anything. I don't know in time how long it took or whatever. But when it finally cleared, I got up out of my little corner, and I heard a cop's radio, which was right near me, and I dug about a foot or 18 inches of cement, looking for some cop underneath this. I didn't find him; I just found the radio.

Q. Just the radio.

A. I found two other guys, two guys that

were with me, Frank Dileo and Mike Minogue. They went into that revolving door, and the cop came in and Frank took his night stick and busted the window in order to get into the --

Q. Revolving door?

A. Yeah. So they were good. Then Todd made it around the corner of that building. I didn't know he could run that fast. It was coming out so quickly. It was just get as far as you could.

Now the four of us met up, and Frankie was blind from --

Q. Dust and other stuff in his eyes?

A. I was half blind, and my eyes were all blurry. Todd, I don't know that he was okay.

We regrouped, and we were going to the tower now to look for survivors. We didn't know where our officer was or whatever that we were looking for. No sooner than we started, the tower -- we regrouped like on this corner.

Q. Down by Albany Street.

A. Yeah. We ended up going this way to look for something. I don't know why we ended up over --

Q. Towards the water, westbound.

A. I think over here there was a bar over there and there were people running all over the place.

We regrouped there. Then it's like, okay, we're going back to the building to look for survivors. As we were going back towards the building, the second tower came down. I just stood there in shock. We were further away from the second tower.

I sat there, and I couldn't believe that I was watching this antenna come down. Then finally somebody just grabbed me, and I went back into the building. There's a bar over there.

Q. Right.

A. After that cleared up, however long that took, then we went back, trying to get into tower --

Q. The south tower?

A. Right. And I ran into -- who was it? Was it Cruthers? Mike Cruthers? I knew him from like -- he didn't know who I was. I was just asking him what we could do, because being backup I had no radio, I had no communication. I didn't

know what was going on.

We were going back towards there, and all of the rigs now and the EMS and everything was on fire. People were running. It was --

Q. Pandemonium?

A. Yeah. We were trying to figure out what to do. Now I think where the hotel was --

Q. Right, where Three World Trade Center was.

A. That was all down. We were climbing over the rubble. We were trying to get -- from there we were trying to get into the lobby and climb over all this rubble and get into this lobby, because there were reports that there were firemen.

Q. Trapped.

A. -- trapped by some elevator bank. When we were going up there, there was fire burning. I don't know if it was Liberty Street or what, but you could see down maybe four floors to the street. You're climbing over the rubble, and you're trying to get in place.

We had no water pressure. We had some hose lines run. There was no water pressure, and

we were just trying to put the fire out and make a push.

From there some squad guys and some rescue guys came in, and they were taking over after this report. From there it was like just trying to search for hours. Finally I walked away like hours later. Time didn't really mean a whole lot.

Q. Right.

A. I went and I was looking for my rig on Trinity. I ran into another guy that was on light duty at Metrotech. He came, and we walked, looking -- we walked back up Cedar back to Trinity, looking for our rig, and I didn't find it. And I was looking for the chauffeur.

He left. He was hurting. I came back to this section I think where Rescue 4 was.

Q. The north tower.

A. Yeah, in the middle somewhere.

Q. The middle.

A. I found our rig over there, like right -- maybe it was back here.

Q. I've got you, right here, away from the buildings on the other side of West.

A. I don't know how it got here and then over to there. But it was there, and it was pumping to tower ladders and to hand lines from the marine unit, which was over here somewhere.

So since I'm the chauffeur, I just took it over.

Q. Right.

A. You know, the guys -- you know we have a new rig. I pumped until like 1:30 that night. The new rig has a computer throttle, and every time we lost water it overcompensated for itself and it started overheating. Then everything was clogged from --

Q. The soot and debris?

A. Yeah, the debris. It started smoking real bad. The chief said take it out of there. I took it out, and another rig took my spot. I just parked it over here. There's like a walkway back here.

I drove the rig down like here and left it here for a while.

Q. Like by that Merrill Lynch building, around the back, closer to the water?

A. Yeah, because there were boats and a

walkway. I left it there for a couple more hours.

I grouped up with all the guys from the company, and we all were here just for a while, because guys came in. Everyone regroups and (inaudible). They were going in and out and doing whatever.

I had enough. It was like 1:30. I was there from like 9:15 or 9:20 before the tower. I had enough. They took the chauffeur away to the hospital. They took Frankie to the hospital. They took Todd to the hospital. So it was just me and Mike left.

So me and Mike got on the rig around 1:00, 1:30, and we brought it back to the firehouse. We had nothing. All our hose was taken off the rig, all the equipment. You know, guys just took whatever they could use. When we came here, we restocked the rig.

From there, I called 230 and there were guys that came in and were just hanging here. They came over and --

Q. They got on your rig?

A. Yeah. They helped me, because I was

worried about the overheating. We washed out all of the filters and whatever we could do when we got it here to get it running better. They were going to help us ride, and we got the rig back in service.

The lieutenant from 230, he came in. I figured I'd let him be the boss. We went back to the dispatcher, and the dispatcher sent us back out at about 5. Then we went back at 5:00. When we went back again, it was just trying to search and looking for people.

I was pumping water -- at that time I was the chauffeur, and we parked back like Broadway. There were rigs there. We just parked our rig. I didn't even want to pump from ours. I used the other rigs. Actually I was pumping three rigs. I'm trying to think of the numbers. There were three rigs relaying water.

Q. All the way up from Broadway?

A. Yeah. Even further than Broadway, because one was down Broadway and Vesey?

Q. Yeah, Vesey, right around in here.

A. That relayed to here, and then that was relaying to another one, which was like right on

this corner.

Q. By the cemetery?

A. They were supplying two towers and a hand line.

I had to make sure, because this one was running out of fuel. Then the one I was in was running out of fuel. I was just one chauffeur with three -- actually I had four rigs.

Q. Running, running, running.

A. Right. The guys went -- they did whatever they could. But I was pretty much from there on the street.

By then somebody came, sanitation or transit, to fuel me up. So we got them all fueled, and we just hung out there, because I'm sitting there ready to go. I'm sitting there saying that things must be organized. These guys must know that I'm -- I'm thinking I'm here doing regular fire and I'd be out of there by 9 or 10:00. I ended up being there until like 4 o'clock.

We went back here and just back to regular. We went back again.

Q. When did you eventually get home?

A. That night on the 12th I got home maybe around 5:00. I got home at 5 because it was my girlfriend's daughter's birthday. I picked her up later, and we went to eat. We passed like 105 and 219. They had their street closed off. I stopped in there, because I know all the guys there. We went to eat, and by then it was like the next day.

Basically that's what happened.

Q. Well, Tom, unless you've got anything else you want to add to it, any feelings like that -- like I said, it's going down as a history, so it's up to you if you want to say anything else; if not --

A. It was just very unorganized. All of the bosses were killed, so no one knew what to do.

Q. Right.

A. Just the way the manpower was and all of the reports that you heard, they said we were under attack. It was like, look, you've got to do this, you've got to get ready for the next one. We heard all kinds of stories.

Q. Sure.

A. The truck was told to go through the Battery Tunnel, which saved their lives, and they had to walk through the Battery Tunnel. So by the time they walked through, everything fell.

Q. It was down already.

A. Then we're here reports that they blew up the Brooklyn Bridge. We're like, wow, we just came across the bridge. You know what I'm saying? I expected worse. I just think that the organization was -- like guys coming in off duty or whatever, manpower, everything has to run even in the chaos.

Q. Right, right.

A. When we got back to Bed Stuy, there was no one here. If there was a small fire or whatever it would spread -- the rest of the city was left defenseless. The building was way too big. We had the one years ago. I felt that they should have torn it down or do whatever then and spread out. The rest of the city, like around here, is vacant, vacant warehouses and property.

Q. They could use a few buildings around here.

A. Yeah. And it's close to the Wall

Street area. Now that Metrotech is being built up, people are looking on this side of the river.

Q. Right.

A. That's basically all I have to say.

Q. All right, Tom. Listen, thanks a lot for your interview?

MR. TAMBASCO: The interview concludes at 1459 hours.

File No. 9110113

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FRANK SWEENEY

Interview Date: October 18, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is October 18th, 2001. The time is 9:35. I'm George Cundari with Richard Dun of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting the interview with the following individual.

Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command.

FIREFIGHTER SWEENEY: My name is Frank Sweeney, firefighter second grade, assigned to Engine 3.

Q. Frank, can you just tell us the events of September 11th, 2001?

A. I was assigned to Engine 3 approximately two weeks before this happened, so I was kind of unfamiliar with the way the high-rise unit operated. But that morning I came in. I got here about 8:00 in the morning, reporting to work. I was upstairs.

I think I was brushing my teeth or something with Angel and Michael. I can remember Angel making fun of Michael, the way he was doing his hair. Angel said, "Frank, go downstairs and make sure they've got your name in the house

watch ready to work.

So I came downstairs, and I walked into the house watch. Battalion 7 was to go down to the World Trade Center for a fire. Somebody pops on the news, and we can see the World Trade Center. There was a lot of black smoke coming from the north tower.

Q. Who was working Battalion 7? Who was the chief?

A. Orio Palmer.

Q. Orio Palmer.

A. So they go down. Very shortly after another set of tones go out. I don't know who is being dispatched. I think it might have been Engine 3. Somebody got on the air and said, "Do you want us to bring the high-rise unit?" The dispatcher came back on and said, "Bring everything you've got."

Now the truck guys are getting ready to go. I'm like, "Holy shit, Scott, what do we do? Where do we go?" Because I don't know who goes in the high-rise unit. So Scott said, "Yeah, come with me. I'll drive the high-rise and you sit next to me." I was like, all right cool.

3 Engine got right out. We were right behind them. We were flying down Seventh Avenue. You can already see people are out on the streets looking. People are already watching. The citizens are already watching what's going on.

Q. When you got there did you see a lot of debris on the ground already?

A. When we got to the scene?

Q. Yeah.

A. When we were coming down -- well, we crossed over West Side Highway and were coming down still just -- you could see a lot of things falling from the tower. But no, I can't see a lot of debris on the street, no, because the World Trade Center is actually up on like a parapet wall of some sort. There's like some kind of wall there you can't see.

We got in front of the World Trade Center, and we could see things were falling. Scott and I just looked at each other like this is not a good place to park. Scott turned the high-rise unit around and parked it under the pedestrian walkway.

At that time I remember looking at

Engine 3. Engine 3 went really far south, and the lieutenant had them turn the rig around and come back north. So we were actually facing the other way and were near a couple hydrants just north of the high-rise unit and just north of that bridge.

Then another unit comes in around us. It was another engine. I can't remember what engine it was. We're standing there for a short period of time. I remember the lieutenant turned to Scott and I and said, "You know, this could be a terrorist thing. Maybe it was a bomb or something." I can't remember his exact words.

Shortly thereafter Scott said, "What's wrong with the flight patterns around here?" I said, "What are you talking about?" And the south tower blew up. Scott said, "That was a plane." I said, "Scott, it was not a plane. It was probably another bomb." He said, "No, I saw it. It was a plane."

Then a chief came up to him and started yelling at Scott saying, "Are you sure you saw a plane?" He was like getting angry. He wanted to make sure that it was a plane that Scott saw.

Scott said, "Yes, I saw it." That's when things really started changing. You could see the fear in a lot of people's faces.

Q. The plane never came over your head, then?

A. No. That was south of us. That was south of us.

All the meantime, we were seeing people jump. That's what really started getting to me. At first it didn't start getting to me. I was like, all right, people are going to be jumping here. We had to keep our heads up to make sure we don't get hit by any of these.

Then I think we were there an hour and it really started getting to be too much. I saw one woman come down and beheaded. It was just too much.

Q. Are you still looking up at the north tower?

A. Yeah, I'm looking at the north tower. The south tower is going. Somewhere in this time -- it's really hard to tell time frames, but I saw Giuliani with Von Essen, and they were going to what I believe was the command post.

It was set up like maybe in front of the Marriott Hotel, somewhere around there, maybe on the West Side Highway, yeah, in front of Two World Financial Center. They were walking over towards there somewhere.

I can remember a lot of the officers yelling to the guys, "Do not put down your equipment. If you put down your equipment, stand next to it, because you don't know who's putting what down next to us."

We were clearing all of the civilians out of the area. I can remember getting upset with one civilian who was being very theatrical about the jumpers, and I asked him to leave. He didn't need to be there.

I can remember about seven people walking from like at the Marriott over to where we were. I said, "Where are you people coming from?" They said the south tower. But it was only like seven people. Other than that there were no civilians walking in the front there. There was nobody coming out from the towers. I was very surprised about that.

Q. Did you have a lot of chaos or mayhem

around you?

A. Not at this point, no. Initially when we parked the rigs there was a lot of civilians still in the area. At this point now it's a lot of security guards from the World Financial Center and a lot of Fire Department and police.

So we're standing by in front of the Winter Garden. The lieutenant has us up one level from the rest of the fireman because he thought if something else were to happen we would be able to run through the Winter Garden, where all these guys would be stuck down there in the basement.

We were actually under the pedestrian bridge at the entrance to the Winter Garden. Scott said, "If something happens, we'll all run into the Winter Garden and go to the right." I said, "Scott, look at this huge concrete pillar here. Nothing's going to go through this thing." Later on the north tower did.

So anyway, we were standing there. One of the chiefs calls for three engines and three trucks to the south tower. I can remember we went back outside, because we walked inside for a

short period, just walked through the doors to see where we could run to in case we needed to.

Q. You heard that over your radio?

A. Then we walked back out. Yeah.

Q. That came over your radio?

A. Came over the radio.

Q. Were there a lot of maydays on the radio at that time?

A. No, no. I don't remember maydays at that time, no.

The lieutenant said, "Let's go, 3 Engine." I bent over to pick up the hose, and I hear what sounded like firecrackers and a low rumble. I look up, and the south tower -- I could see the top part of the siding overlapping the bottom side of the siding. The siding actually was like this. Then I saw the dirt above that.

I ran. I was right behind Scott. Scott ran into the Winter Garden and got against a concrete pillar, and I just hugged the pillar with Scott. Aguilera was right behind me. I thought we were dead. I thought the tower was coming down on top of us. I thought we were

gone.

It was a loud rumble. The Winter Garden filled up with the dirt, the dust and that was it. Then it was quiet. Then you heard the maydays on the radio. I can remember hearing, "Mayday, mayday, mayday. Mayday, mayday, mayday." I think I can remember like Ladder 4 or something like that, if that makes any sense.

Q. Right now you're just with Scott in the Winter Garden? Anybody else with you?

A. Scott and Aguilera.

The rumbling stops, and we start looking for people. I can't even see Scott, and I'm right on his back. That's how thick it was.

We start back towards the entrance to go back out of the building, and we hear people in this little room. So Rob and I go towards the little room. I don't know where Scott went at that time. We grabbed the people out of this little cubbyhole and bring them to the back of the building.

Then we go back to the front of the Winter Garden and we found another person just wandering around. He said he's Commissioner of

the Fire Department and he needed to make a phone call. He tried making a phone call on one of those little security phones. We're trying to tell him he can't call out on that phone. He says he has to call headquarters. We just grabbed him, pulled him and dragged him out back.

Q. Do you know which commissioner this was?

A. It was not Von Essen. It was somebody I don't recognize. He identified himself as a commissioner. He was trying to make a phone call on that little white security phone. So we just told him, "Come on, let's go. You're in shock or something." We just dragged him out back of the Winter Garden.

Then we came back out front looking for the lieutenant, who then shortly appears. Now we're worried about Kevin Cronick and our chauffeur. We didn't know where our chauffeur was. The interesting thing there is the pedestrian walkway bridge is still up. It's still intact at that time. The south tower is gone. Rob Aguilera says to me, "The Marriott's gone." I said, "Never mind that. The tower is

gone." I didn't think that the tower would come down, not like that. I thought maybe a quarter of the top came off, because it didn't seem like that long of a rumble.

Q. How dark was it for how long a period? Was it a long period or short time?

A. I thought it was kind of short, thinking of what came down. What was interesting is when we went back out towards the walkway, it was actually getting clearer. The closer we walked to the tower, the clearer it was getting. Inside the building it was very dense.

Q. Were there a lot of people there other than you and your partner in the Winter Garden?

A. Just the commissioner and maybe three other guys that we took out back.

Q. There were no civilians?

A. No, no. I don't know where they all escaped to.

So the pedestrian walkway was still up at that time after the south tower came down.

So we just got together with our company, and we walked through the garden out to the back.

Q. The second building hasn't come down yet?

A. No. The north tower is still standing.

We come out on Vesey Street and we walk towards the Hudson River. The lieutenant -- I said, "Where are we going? We've got to do something here." He said, "Well, this other one may come down." I said, "This ain't coming down. That was just a fluke that that first one came down." All the time I wanted to go up in there. He said, "Yeah, the second one -- that one may come down too." Not even five, ten minutes later the thing came down.

Q. So you were around North End Street and Vesey at the time the second one came down?

A. Yeah, North End and Vesey. Everybody started running north, up to where you see North Park on there. We started running north. That whole area became cloudy.

Q. Were there boats parked over there, going to New Jersey, taking people over?

A. There were boats taking people over, but I don't know if it was before the second tower came or after. I know afterwards when we

found Engine 5 and the fireman having a heart attack, yeah, there were boats there and we put him on the boats and sent him over.

Then the rest of the day we just spent running from bomb scares and gas leaks.

Stuyvesant school had a gas leak. The World Financial had a gas leak or bomb or something.

Q. Then you were putting out fires on the rigs, ambulances, police cars at that time?

A. No, no. By that time we were up by Chambers Street. We're north of Chambers now. Now the Fire Department is trying to gather the people and make some kind of organization out of it and getting companies together at that time.

Once they got us back together and organized somewhat, they sent us back down to Vesey, where we stood and waited for Seven World Trade Center to come down.

Q. Were you able to drive your apparatus back or you came back with Engine 3?

A. Well, no, that's the interesting thing. After the north tower came down, that pedestrian walkway bridge was gone, and the high-rise unit was underneath there.

Q. How did you get back to quarters?

Jumped on the back of a volley rescue.

A. Oh, right, right, that's how we got back. That's right.

But that was a long day.

Q. After the towers collapsed, you never really saw any injuries after that? No civilians were coming up to you?

A. No, it was surprising; right? Not many injuries at all. I think you either got hit with that building and died or --

Q. It was unbelievable the lack of injuries.

A. Yeah.

Q. Anything else?

A. No, you know, I can remember -- we were standing on Vesey Street, and it was just -- everybody is looking around in disbelief. We were wondering where 12 Truck is, when Angel Rivera?

Q. Yeah.

A. Angel Rivera was walking around in a daze and we found him. We said, "Where is the rest of the truck?" He started to explain where

the rest of the truck was and what happened.

Q. And they came up after that?

A. Heinz came up, and then we found McGimpsey.

Q. He told us that Mazy and Matt Tansey were shipped to New Jersey.

A. Yeah, I didn't hear that part. I remember they were trying to rinse McGimpsey's eyes out. His eyes were killing him. They were bright red, and they were hurting him really bad. So we sat him down and tried to wash them.

Q. Anything else to add?

A. I wish I could help you with the placement of rigs or something, but I can't.

Q. There was a lot going on that day.

A. The only other thing as far as citizens was in the north tower I can remember seeing citizens walking through the glass out an exit way. It looked like they were exiting out the north, but they could have been circling around to the back.

There's nothing really else I think I could help you with.

Q. I would like to thank you, Frank, for

taking the time and doing this interview.

MR. CUNDARI: This concludes the
interview. It's 9:50.

File No. 9110114

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER SCOTT HOLOWACH

Interview Date: October 18, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

S. HOLOWACH

MR. CUNDARI: Today's date is October 18, 2001. The time is 9:15. I'm George Cundari with Richard Dunn of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an individual with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name, rank, title and assigned command?

A. SCOTT HOLOWACH, Firefighter third grade, assigned to Engine 3.

Q. Can you please tell us the events of September 11, 2001.

A. I just got on that morning. We were in the house -- I was in the house watch with Angel Juarbe, one of the guys who was missing from Ladder 12. We noticed on the news that one of the planes hit the Trade Center. Shortly after that the Chief was sent and I guess like 30 seconds later we were sent. We were sent by ourselves at first and we called up dispatch and asked if they want the high rise and they said to roll everything, so we took the high rise down with us.

As we were going, we went down to Canal Street and made a right and went to the West Side Highway and came down towards the Trade Center on the

S. HOLOWACH

West Side Highway. As we were responding, all you could see is a lot of smoke pouring out of the north tower. I had Firefighter Sweeney with me in the high rise rig.

When we first pulled up, we drove just south of the pedestrian bridge, the north pedestrian bridge, which came out of the tower to the Winter Garden. I noticed a lot of debris coming down from the building, so we had to jump back into the high rise rig and made a U turn and parked underneath the pedestrian bridge facing north.

At that time, I started walking towards Engine 3. Engine 3 drove south to the south pedestrian bridge to make a U turn to come back and as I'm walking towards the Engine to find out what Lieutenant Walsh wanted us to do, I heard the sound of a jet plane. I looked up and saw it pretty close and I was like holy shit. What's going on with the with the flight patterns. All of a sudden, the wings turned and it dove right into the building and it was screwed up.

At that time Chief Ganci was behind me and he thought there was another explosion in the north tower and that's when I turned around and said Chief, listen, there is a second plane that hit the other tower. He

S. HOLOWACH

was like no no no no, we have another explosion. I said no, Chief, I witnessed it. I watched the plane hit the other tower. He is like are you sure. I said Chief, I'm 100 hundred percent positive I watched the second plane hit the other tower.

That's when Ganci got on the radio and called for the military. Walsh walked up to him and said Chief, 3 engines here with the high rise. Do you want us to go into the tower and report to the command center. He said, no we are going to set up another command center outside. Just stand fast. They set up the command center in the mouth of the garage of the World Financial building. We were standing there and Lieutenant Walsh said listen, why don't you go stand on top underneath the pedestrian bridge, because if anything happens there is too many guys, here at least you guys can run some other way. This way you are not tripping over 100 other guys.

We were standing underneath the pedestrian bridge. We were watching people jump out of the building. I guess we were there for a little while, 20, 25 minutes. In the meantime we were sitting there and something gave me a gut feeling that something was going to happen, so I turned to the guys and I said

S. HOLOWACH

listen, if anything happens, I said let's dive into this building because the Winter Garden, the staircase is pretty solid and there is two hallways. We will run to the right.

Shortly after that, sure enough, I heard -- I don't know even -- I guess a rumbling sound. I looked up and I see the whole 70th floor basically like buckle out and start crumbling down the outside of the building. At the time I grabbed two other guys and said let's get the hell out of here. We dove into the building and after the rumbling stopped --

Q. Would have been south tower collapsing?

A. The south tower.

Q. You could see it from your position?

A. Yes. I visually watched the 70 floor. It looked like almost it was buckling outwards and then it just went down the outside of the building, just like scaled the outside of the building and it just started pancaking and that's when I grabbed the two guys and the third guy followed us in. We dove into the hallway to the right of the staircase and huddled the wall. I guess the fourth guy, Cronick, ran out the back of the building.

But after the rumbling stopped, it was so

S. HOLOWACH

thick in there you couldn't even see each other next to us, so my first thought was to make sure the guys were all right. So I asked Sweeney and Aguilera, who was a proby, a 14 weeker here, if they were okay. I screamed for Cronick and they said they think he ran out the back. I said all right, I said we got a lot of people with us, we got to start searching the area.

So we started searching the area to make sure that everybody is getting out, take them out the back. I got split up from these guys. I ended up with another proby from another company and we went and started searching the lobby of the Winter Garden and the first floor of the World Financial Center.

Q. Scott, did you have a radio at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you able to contact anybody on the radio?

A. I didn't try to, actually I didn't think about it. I don't remember if anybody was --

Q. Was it working?

A. Yes, it was working. I don't remember hearing --

Q. What channel were you on?

A. I think I switched to 7. I'm not sure. I

S. HOLOWACH

don't remember now. I'm pretty sure I did. Like I said, after I ran to the proby, we searched the ground level of the World Financial Center. We ended up outside on the southbound side of the mouth of the garage. We searched out front and we ended up directing a bunch of people, Chiefs and civilians, towards the water. When we walked back to the entrance to the Winter Gardens is when we ran into -- found you guys again and we came outside and found Lieutenant Walsh. He was worried about our chauffeur. Now we started looking for our chauffeur. We found our chauffeur. We were standing on Vesey and West and I guess the Chiefs and the other officers made the decision to move everybody down towards the Pier, towards the water, to reorganize and figure out what's going on.

Q. That was by where the fire boat was?

A. Yes.

Q. Bank Street?

A. No, actually down by the river terrace. We were actually on the water, right where Marine One ended up being docked. I guess we were there 10 minutes, 15 minutes. It's hard to tell time. Everything went so quick. We were there a short period

S. HOLOWACH

of time and that's when we heard the north tower coming down and noticed the big dust cloud and we started running north towards the water.

Before the north tower came down, we helped a lot of firemen get on the ferries and shipped them over to Jersey.

Q. Were they injured?

A. Yes, they were injured. We had the one Lieutenant on it. I don't remember what company he was from. He looked like he might be having a heart attack, so we put him out. Guys from 21 Truck were there with injuries, so we put them on the ferries. A few other guys from other companies, I'm not even sure where they were from.

Like I said, after the second collapse, and the dust started settling, we went back and grabbed whatever gear we could and headed north to the end of the Pier and then went back to the West Side Highway is where they were mustering everybody and they kept on pushing us north because they thought there was a gas leak and a bomb in the American Express building. They kept on moving us north of the high school there.

Q. Stuyvesant High School?

A. Yes, Stuyvesant High School, until they

S. HOLOWACH

figured out, I guess, there was no gas leak or no secondary bomb. Or no bomb. I guess they put the PD in there to search it. They moved us back south. We ended up back up on Vesey Street and West Street and just hanging out until tower 7 came down.

After tower 7 came down, we went right to work over at tower 7 to put the fires out. That's where we stayed until we were relieved.

Q. Did you see a lot of civilians coming out towards you away by the water on West Street?

A. There wasn't much civilians at the water, no, no.

Q. There wasn't too many --

A. More Fire Department personnel, PD and EMS on the water. There was a few civilians, but not an overwhelming amount. As I said, more of the emergency personnel went towards the water. I think most of the civilians went north.

Q. After the collapse, did you -- was there many injuries after that or you saw a lot of injuries after the collapse?

A. I saw a few. I expected a lot more. If we saw 20 or 30 injuries, that was a lot. Most of the injuries were from taking in all that dust it seemed

S. HOLOWACH

like. More people just coughing and difficulty breathing afterwards.

MR. CUNDARI: Scott, I would like to thank you for taking part in this interview. Time is 9:25. This concludes this interview.

File No. 9110140

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS GABY

Interview Date: October 23, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

T. GABY

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is October 23rd. The time is 10:16. I'm Mike Tambasco assigned to the World Trade Center Task Force. We're doing an interview into the events of September 11th at the World Trade Center and our interview today is with...

FIREFIGHTER GABY: Tom Gaby, aide to Chief Cassano, Firefighter First Grade.

Q. Would you be good enough, Tom?

A. Okay. Prior to the date of 9/11, on 9/10, I worked as an aide to Chief Burns on an overtime tour. The morning of 9/11, I was having coffee right outside Chief Ganci's office, speaking to the secretary, Lisa DeFazio. Chief Ganci came out of his office and yelled out that a plane had struck the World Trade towers and that Chief Nigro should look out his window. With that Chief Burns, standing by the commissary kitchen, said come on, Tom, let's go, and we were off.

We went down the elevator with most of the staff Chiefs, Chief Barbara, myself, Chief Ganci, Chief Ingram, Chief Burns, and we went down to the C1 level. We got in our cars and proceeded to the Brooklyn Bridge heading towards the World Trade Center. I believe and I'm pretty sure I was the first staff car in line. Chief Ganci was driving with Chief Nigro. Steve

T. GABY

Mosiello was driving both of them.

As we were going over the bridge, Chief Burns said to me, it doesn't look like the sprinkler system is working too well and kind of jokingly said that to me. I said, yes, I guess maybe it's too much fire, and we kind of laughed about it and proceeded to go over the bridge. As we approached the World Trade Center, we got there pretty fast. I don't think there were that many companies there at that time.

I pulled up as far as I could under the north bridge in front of 1 World Trade Center. I believe that was the north tower. With that I opened the trunk for Chief Burns. He proceeded to get his gear out and I -- well, basically he said to me, his last words to me were, Tommy, I don't want to get stuck here. Park the car far away. With that I took the car and made a U-turn and headed north on West Street. I parked the car on Chambers, on the corner of Chambers and West.

Looking back towards the scene as I was leaving, I wanted to see if I could find Chief Cassano's car because my turnout gear was in his car because I normally drive Chief Cassano. I proceeded heading towards Chief Cassano's car, walking back towards Chief Cassano's car, and Chief Ingram grabbed

T. GABY

me and told me he wanted me to alert Field Com with setup in front of I think the Financial Building, on the West Street side, World Financial Center.

Q. The Merrill Lynch Building?

A. Right. The Merrill Lynch Building. That's where our command center was for the outside. Basically, that's what I did for a few minutes, even before I went and got my gear. I proceeded to look for the car again and then, spotting it, I came upon Chief Callan's aide.

Q. Who was that?

A. James Migalia. He came up to me and said he had no gear in his car; could he use my gear. I told him, here, take my gear, the key for the car was in the gas cap, there was a spare key, and I would get something else. With that Chief Ganci was yelling at me to get the rigs out of West Street, on the West Street promenade. In other words, he wanted all the rigs cleared out of the area. I ran back and forth a few times doing that and then left to get my gear.

Actually, what I did was I went up back to Chief Burns' car and took Kevin Glock's gear, which is Chief Burns' normal driver. His helmet doesn't fit me, but I had it. So I got his turnout coat and just his

T. GABY

helmet. I took the -- which I had the radio on, I also took the cell phone with me, headed back towards the command center outside, and believe it or not, somewhere in between there the plane had hit, the second plane.

Q. The second plane?

A. I saw it coming in, I heard it, and bang, it hit. I proceeded to try to call my wife to tell her to stay home on the cell phone. It didn't work. I went into I believe the American Express Building and called her from there. I left a message at work for her to go home if she could, and then I went back towards the command board. I didn't know exactly where Chief Burns was, but watching all the outside activities going on, I was trying to get a feel for where he would be. I looked at the board and it was kind of like in disarray at this time. So, basically, I was just trying to help out and see if I could listen.

At some point I was able to ascertain that I think Chief Burns said that he was in 2 World Trade Center, the south tower, and I said, well, let me see if I can make my way down there. So I walked along the buildings on West Street, on the west side of West Street, because people were jumping and the stuff was

T. GABY

falling out of all the buildings.

At that point I saw the bridge. I went under the pedestrian bridge to cover myself and I made kind of a dash for the Vista International Hotel. I couldn't tell what time it was. Like I said, this thing here, it seemed like it was just minutes, but I guess it was longer than that.

When I got into the Vista, I was looking to see if I could find somebody who knew exactly where Chief Burns was. So I went up to the Chief that was in the lobby of the Vista, which is, I guess, the Marriott, and I asked Chief Galvin if he had seen Chief Burns, and he said he did not see him, but he said that he might be in the south tower. So I said okay.

Having gone in through the side of the Vista, I noticed that there was a restaurant there and I felt this would be a good time for me to take a leak, and I just happened to go into that restaurant because I knew it was going to be a long time before I got a shot at it, and I was up since 7:00 o'clock. So I figured let me go now, I'll have a shot, and then I can go see Chief Burns, figuring that once I got inside, I was safe, to be honest with you. That was my primary thing was to get inside. Having spotted the restaurant, like

T. GABY

I said, I knew if I'd walk into the restaurant there would be a rest room there.

I walked into the rest room, went to the bathroom and was just about ready to come out and I heard a rumbling sound. Now, having heard on the radio previously that there was a possibility that the elevators were letting go, I was hoping that that was what it was. As it proceeded, which seemed like a long time, but I'm sure it wasn't -- when I look at it on television, it doesn't seem to be -- I could tell that it was much worse. In my mind, I thought it was the north tower, part of it was coming down, and I felt like let me sit down, get low. I might be okay here. As it turned out, after the roar, I had absolutely no damage in that bathroom. There was no damage, there was no smoke, it just was black as night.

I initially tried to get out and the door was jammed. I couldn't tell how it was jammed or why it was jammed. I had no flashlight. I didn't have my turnout coat, so there was no flashlight in there. I proceeded to give Maydays on every channel. I had the mobile radio, so I had every channel. I heard absolutely nothing. It was completely dead. I started to think that maybe I'd be okay there for a while

T. GABY

because I could breathe, there was no fire, and I didn't seem to be hurt in any way. So I felt, well, at least I'm okay at this point. But the silence, the eeriness of having no mobile communication with anything made me feel a little uneasy. So I felt, well, maybe what I should do is try to get out of here. I eventually forced the door open. Just by banging it and pulling hard, it opened in, and not being able to see, I kind of just walked into what was like a wall.

Q. That wasn't there when you came in?

A. That wasn't there when I came in. So then I started to get a little nervous and I said let me sit down and calm down. I gave Maydays again on all the radio channels and I heard nothing. At this point I tried to use the cell phone that I had and there was no cell phone. That was probably the only light I could see. I really couldn't see much. I was a little bit nervous but basically still not aware of really the gravity of the situation. So what I thought was, well, you know what? Let me sit down and calm myself down, and then I thought, well, you know, I'd be better off if I could get out of here.

So I opened the door again and felt for a way

T. GABY

I could get out and somehow, through whatever divine force there was, there was a void low in the left-hand corner. I wasn't able to get out with my helmet on or my turnout coat, but I could fit through that crack. So what I did was I took the helmet and I pushed it ahead of me. There was all sorts of debris and stuff there, but it seemed to be moving. So I said, well, I'll go as far as I can. Maybe I can just see a light or whatever or yell to someone, and luckily I just was able to push it far enough that I could see that there was an opening all the way down.

I got maybe six feet and I could see to my left the entrance to the restaurant was still in good shape. Although covered with everything, I still could see. So I said I know I'm getting out of here now because I could see daylight, and I said, okay, and I just kept pushing ahead. It didn't take that long, maybe five or six minutes, and I was able to get to the point where I could stand up in that area of the restaurant.

I put my turnout gear back on and I proceeded to run outside, and I couldn't make heads or tails of what was going on because it was still smoky, kind of like a dense little fog kind of thing. There was a guy

T. GABY

from rescue out in the street yelling to people to keep running, and it was all rubble all over the ground, a couple bodies and stuff like that. So I immediately just tried to run. I tripped a little bit, he held me, and then I ran across the street. Believe it or not, I ran across the street and I was looking for everybody and it didn't seem like I could find anybody. It was kind of eerie. It was almost like I was the only person around.

My immediate thought was let me call my wife, and I tried to call her to see if she went home, but I couldn't get her, but I left another message telling her -- and I listened to it later on at some point. I forgot I called her back up. But she saved the messages. I said I was a little dusty but I was okay.

So with that I heard on the radio for the first time a voice and it was Chief Ganci talking to Steve asking for truck companies. So I felt, oh, okay, I'm back in the game here. There's somebody around. But I still couldn't find anybody. I looked for Chief Ganci and I don't know -- some people say that I was on the south. I thought I headed north, but maybe I got turned around. Anyhow, I wound up talking to Chief Galvin again in the middle of the street, on West

T. GABY

Street, someplace on West Street, and with that I said to Chief Galvin, I don't know if anybody else is around, but I'll stay with you because, you know, this way I'll know I'm helping somebody.

So he yelled to me to get the guys from across the street. There were car fires all over the place. He said get those guys and bring them over here. So I started getting guys who were trying to put out car fires to come across the street. Apparently Chief Galvin must have known about the other building. I had no idea that the first building was down to be honest with you. Because I couldn't tell. You still couldn't see it.

So basically I just told the guys come across the street, and guys were like stretching lines, I was trying to help a couple of guys that were hooking up the hydrants, I was yelling to them, come on, the Chief wants us over here, and what seemed like maybe ten minutes or whatever of trying to get the guys across the street, which we got most of them across the street, I heard a tremendous roar like I've never heard before and it sounded like a jet engine was like right over my head, like I was on a runway with a jet engine just taking off over my head.

T. GABY

At that point I kind of looked up in the air because that's where -- and I was looking for a plane. I couldn't see anything, but I saw people running. So I said, well, this may be a good time to start running. I wasn't sure which way to run, but I watched them run and I kind of went to my right and I started running, and then there was a complete -- a blanket over me and I banged and fell down three or four times, and each time I got up, I got up with more stuff in my mouth and it was becoming more increasingly difficult to breathe. I was trying to breathe through like the jacket part of my coat and just try to filter some of the crap that was coming in my mouth. I heard somebody yell breathe through your nose and I was trying that, but I wasn't getting enough air it didn't seem like. Now I wasn't running anymore. I fell down three or four times. I said, well, I can't even see. This is ridiculous to run. But I felt, well, you know what? Maybe I'll just kind of walk and try to head in the direction of the sounds of people that I heard.

There was an ESU cop and he had some kind of water bottle on his back with a bite ball, and he came up to me and said bite into this, flush around your mouth and spit it out, and that's what I did, and I was

T. GABY

able to at that point clear out some of the crap in my mouth and I felt a little bit better. He had a towel or something and he said we'll share the towel and we'll start breathing, and at that point that's what I did. I started breathing through the towel with this guy. There was like three of us on this towel.

We got up to -- I don't know what street even. Somebody told me it was down on the west side by Albany Street and there was a hydrant open with very little water pressure and we kind of cleaned off there. Chief Lakiotes was there, a couple other firefighters and a couple other ESU cops and stuff. But we just kind of cleaned up, and at that point I started heading back to where I thought maybe people would be.

Guys were coming in from -- I guess from all over at this point now. I saw regiments of guys coming down the highway, and even training, they were coming from training, because I noticed a couple Chiefs, Santangelo and Chief Idiart from training that I've known and I saw them and they all started heading down towards the buildings, and at that point I somehow ran into Steve Mosiello again and he was looking for Chief Ganci. So I said, well, I'll help you look for Chief

T. GABY

Ganci because I knew that, you know, that was his boss and, if I could find him, maybe we could find out what's going on, still not really knowing.

I felt kind of like, I don't know, but I wasn't being really aware of what was going on, but I was very lucky. It's bizarre, but through no really desire of my own, I was able to survive this thing, and it really -- it was just a matter of where you were.

Q. Basic dumb luck.

A. Dumb luck. Really basic dumb luck. Because the odds would be, even after the first building came down, I wasn't aware of it, and when the second one come down, I wasn't even thinking about that one coming down. So, I mean, it sounds crazy, but at this point I was just trying to hook up with somebody during this whole thing to help, you know, to get back into some kind of order of where we could find guys and do things, and it just never seemed to come about.

I went with Steve. We looked for Chief Ganci. He was very upset. Then we heard the command center was all the way up on Vesey Street. Then we went up that way and then it was like further north towards the park and we started heading up there, and we got a ride with the Commissioner's driver and we

T. GABY

wound up with the Mayor up in 23rd Street by -- I guess that was where they made the command center for OEM.

Q. Right.

A. Steve wanted to tell the Mayor that Chief Ganci was missing and that we lost a lot of guys, and that was basically what we did. Then we went back, we hitched a ride back to Police Plaza to tell the Police Commissioner exactly what was going on, and we wound up getting some clean clothes there. They gave us police uniforms. So we wound up there and then they took us back towards the scene and we looked for Chief Ganci.

As we were going back down the West Side Highway, Chief Cruthers, we wound up seeing Chief Cruthers and Chief Butler, he was at the command board at Vesey and West, at Chambers and West rather, and then they said they found Ganci and Steve started running towards where -- Steve knew basically where Ganci was, and what I failed to say is, when we found Steve, when I found Steve, we actually went back to look for Ganci before we went up to the command center.

Q. Okay. From where he had last figured he probably was?

A. Yes. Because Steve had an idea because when he had talked to Steve on the radio, he had said that

T. GABY

he was going to be -- I didn't know what he had told Steve, but I heard him ask for truck companies, and he must have told Steve that he was going to be south of where the command center was, and when I came out of the building, that was my first thing was to look for the command center, I remember that, and basically, when I saw where I thought the command center was outside, where the command board was, there was an airplane tire. My immediate thing was that another plane had hit. So that's what I said.

Then I went into what was, I guess, the World Trade Center -- the World Financial Center and Merrill Lynch and I made a phone call to my wife again. That's where I had left the message. So that's basically where I was at that point, and then I did hook up with Steve and we did go back to look at right around in that building there. He knew where Ganci was, but he was covered with rubble, I believe.

Army was there at that point, too. I don't know how much after, but there was Army there. That was after the second building I remember. The Army was there because Steve told a general that this is what happened, this is where our Chief of Department was, and they had a couple of bulldozers going there

T. GABY

already.

Q. Already?

A. Yes. There were a couple of bulldozers going there. So, basically, I guess, wherever they got them from, they started picking up some of the rubble. Basically, that was all I can remember. It's kind of strange, but I saw the second plane coming in. I remember that vividly. I remember hearing it and thinking why is that plane coming so close to that building after it got hit, but thinking maybe it was an Army plane or just a plane coming in to observe what was going on, and then when it hit the building, to be honest with you, from where I was standing on the west side of West Street, it looked like it kind of glanced off the back of the building. You couldn't tell the damage it had done.

So, I mean, that was my recollection of that and, you're right, I mean, some of the things seemed like they took a couple of minutes, but other things seemed like they took a long time. Basically, that was it. I mean, I guess being very lucky was in it for me that day. One more minute and I'm probably in 2 World Trade Center. The weird thing was, like I said, it wasn't like I had a pressing need to go to the

T. GABY

bathroom, but I just thought that eventually I was going to have to go.

Q. So it would be smart to do it now.

A. To do it now. Chief Cassano had told me he had done the same thing. He had gone to the bathroom just previous to that. So it was weird because we both picked the same bathroom to go to and just a series of events that happened that I just happened to be in there and that was -- believe me. I go back there, a couple times that I've been back there, I look at it, and it's amazing to me how nothing happened in that bathroom. That bathroom was perfectly intact. So when people say things were meant to happen, I just think --

Q. It's your day or it's not your day?

A. Yes. It's absolutely true, I mean, and never more vividly than that day. I wish I could say I was -- I guess the only good thing I did out of this whole thing was being able to extricate myself because I felt that, you know what? I could be here for a couple of days and that was an uneasy feeling. So I figured let me try to get out of here. But like I said, I was completely okay. There was no heat, no fire, no smoke, my body was okay. It was just that I felt uncomfortable being in this kind of like this

T. GABY

six-by-six-foot room.

That's it. I don't know what else I could say. If I could answer any questions, I'll definitely do it.

Q. No, there's nothing else that I need to ask you. That's it. If there's anything else you just want to put after this, feel free.

A. Actually, basically, I think that most of the things that I said were just off the top of my head because that's all I can remember, but if I could remember any more, I would definitely give it to you. Except I'm very lucky. Thank you very much.

MR. TAMBASCO: That being the case, this interview will conclude at 10:40 a.m.

File No. 9110182

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM QUICK

Interview Date: November 1, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

W. QUICK

MR. McCOURT: The date is November 1, 2001.

My name is Tom McCourt, Investigator, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview along with Murray Murad, Investigator, New York City Fire Department. We are interviewing Firefighter William Quick.

Q. Mr. Quick, just identify yourself please.

A. Firefighter Quick, Ladder 134, badge number 12123.

Q. Can you describe the events that happened on September 11, 2001.

A. September 11, 2001 started with for me putting my children on a school bus at 8:30 in the morning. After that, I walked into my house. I was getting a box of tank top Fire Department shirts to bring to the fire house from my volleyball tournament. I was driving in my car towards Queens. I heard that a plane hit the World Trade Center. With that, me being a firefighter through and through, I just started heading towards the World Trade Center. I'm one of these guys that always carries his gear in his car and a fire extinguisher, just in case of an emergency.

As I got on the Van Wyck and as I got up to about the Grand Central Parkway, I met the NYPD and I

W. QUICK

followed NYPD all the way into Manhattan on their tail, as fast as I could. I drove with NYPD and met up with another madman ESU truck and he got me down to Church and Vesey Street, where I parked right on Church and Vesey. Right behind I think was Engine 21. I'm not even sure. I'm not too sure. They were parked right on the corner there.

Q. What was the scene when you got there?

A. When I got there the buildings were still on fire. As soon as I parked my car and got out it was mass hysteria. There were people running every direction imaginable, screaming and yelling. People were running past me with blackened smoke faces and people just running with terror in their eyes. No coordination or anything going on down there, anything like that. I started donning my fire fighting gear that I had in the car.

With that Lieutenant Eddie Datri, from squad one, came running up the street and he was getting dressed while I'm getting dressed. He looked at me --

Q. He was off duty?

A. I think he was off duty too. I think he must have just came from the fire house because he was still in uniform. He looked at me and he said Billy, can I

W. QUICK

put my sneakers in your car. I said yes. He said all right. I will meet you up on the fire floor. I said I will be there. That's the last I saw of Eddie D'Atri. He ran from Vesey to Church right between, I think, building four and five, right there. That would be this building here. This is the fire building, right, yes, this is the fire building. I was parked here on Church and Vesey and he ran down this way and of course the building is right here so I'm sure he ran right between these two buildings.

Q. Which buildings?

A. Between four.

MR. McCOURT: Between four and two.

A. And five, but he ran between four and five. I'm sure he ran to the closest building, knowing him. He was a great firefighter. With that he left me and I donned all my gear. I started going across Church Street and when I went across Church Street, I saw the door open on building 5 and a police officer yelled to me. He said I need help, I have people trapped down in the subway. They won't move. Like that. So I was like all right, I'm here to help. You know.

I think this man saved my life really.

Q. You went down there?

W. QUICK

A. I didn't go down into the subway. I went in, and as soon as you go in this entrance, there is like either four or five escalators, I can't recollect, right there. What it was was all these people were bunched on the escalator. They all had darkened faces, smoke, bleeding, injuries, but they were in mass hysteria. They were like --

Q. Where were they coming from, do you have any idea?

A. What I think this policeman did is, I think, he took them from the north tower, maybe the north tower or the south tower or what have you because of falling debris and I think he huddled them into this building and walked them through the subway. Because they all had blackened faces and that's why I feel they were from the building. So what I did is when I got to the top of the escalator, you know, I have been in a rescue company. I'm pretty quick to adapt to situations like this. I just yelled out really loud Fire Department. All of a sudden they all stopped and looked up at me.

Q. Took command of the situation?

A. Right, and I just said there are ambulances outside to take care of you. Just walk out these doors

W. QUICK

and go to your left and go towards Vesey Street. When I ran in, I saw like, you know, two or three ambulances as I was running in. So I just -- but the cop, he said to me I can't get these people to move. I said all right. With that they all started moving.

I said look, you lead them out. So the cop led them out and they kept on going. There was like around 50, 60 people easy. I looked at every one of their faces as they went by. They were all blackened, bleeding, with different injuries, and so they all got out and all of a sudden I looked down at the bottom of the escalator and there was a guy there, an older gentleman. I said pal, come on, let's go, you got to get going. All of a sudden the guy looked up at me, and he was really bleeding profusely from the head. So I ran down the escalator stairs, I grabbed the back of his belt and I ran him up the stairs. Now I got back outside. He was the last one.

There were ambulances there. These people just I think, scurried, I don't even think that they went to the ambulance. I carried the guy to the ambulances and said here you go, to the Fire Department EMT. I said you will be all right. I turned around and when I started running along --

W. QUICK

Q. Where were the ambulances parked, do you know?

A. The ambulances were parked like on --

Q. By your car?

A. Yes, by Church and Vesey. Yes, there were police cars and an emergency service truck right there, a couple of police cars. The ambulances were right there. When I started to run back, all of a sudden I heard the rumble. Now all of a sudden I see people running towards me. I said all right, maybe part of the plane fell off in the building or a section. I had no idea that the whole building was coming down. So what happened was there was by Fifth Street, there was like a doorway. It wasn't really a doorway. It was just like an I beam. These I beams -- this is four and this is five building. These I beams are right here. This is where I stood for the first blast and the entranceway was a little further up from the subway.

I stood here and with that, gray smoke came and all of a sudden, black smoke came. When the black smoke came it was such high heat that I had to get down on one knee. The heat was so intense that I laid on my stomach. I laid on my stomach. At this time I was laying on my stomach, my head was hiding inside my coat

W. QUICK

and I was saying to myself, you have been on the job 20 years. You have been through every tough fire in every situation. You have survived. You know what to do. Just hang in there. You know, I'm breathing inside my coat, breathing inside my shirt and my T-shirt. I'm just, you are out in the middle of the street, just stay alive.

With that, someone steps on me and the guy said "Who's that." I said Fire Department. The guy said: "I think I'm burnt." I said pal, I can't even see you. I said just stay next to me until the smoke rises. I will see if I can take care of you. It took a good ten minutes. It was a beautiful clear day. I explained this to other firemen, like I was in a bedroom with a mattress fire. That's how intense the smoke was. And for me to hide inside my coat and not be able to breathe is pretty intense. The high heat. This guy thought he was burned.

Q. Did he stay with you?

A. Yes, he did, yes yes. He was a Fire Department EMT. Then after a good ten minutes, the smoke lifted where you could see each other. It was just snowing out from the dust and the soot and everything like that. This guy had 3 inches of hot

W. QUICK

soot on top of him. So did I. I stood up and brushed my eyes off and got all the stuff out of my mouth. He started shaking. He was wearing a short sleeve shirt.

Q. He didn't have a -- he probably didn't have his jacket on?

A. He didn't have a jacket on. The EMTs -- you know, it was a crystal clear day. I brushed off his arms and everything and he kept looking at his arms and he said: "Oh, man, my arms are so warm." From what I could see it doesn't look like any burns. Maybe you have like a sunburn or something like that. I said "Are you all right." He said "Yeah". I said are you okay to walk and everything. He said "Yes". He just left. I never saw him again. He went on his way.

After that I stood there. I looked around and it was like the night of the living dead. It was like it was snowing out still. Everyone had the thousand mile stare on their eyes, like coming out from where they hid, walking across Church Street and just looking. I had full fire fighting gear and I stepped out and I just looked around. Then I walked across Church Street from the fire building and looked up at the building and saw that it was still burning. So I was like, all right, I don't think I have to go into

W. QUICK

the building because I got a feeling there are more people in the street hurt from the collapse.

So I started my search down Church Street, checking all the vehicles. They were all wrecked with debris on top of them, everything like that.

MR. McCOURT: Continuing the interview with firefighter Quick.

A. At this time I walked across Church Street. I saw that the building was still burning and I felt it was my need to stay in the street and look for victims from the first collapse. As I went down the street, I checked out every vehicle.

Q. Describe the terrain --

A. The condition of the street, everything was covered with 3 to 5 inches of soot. Debris in the street, it was everywhere. Papers, things from the office building. Further down towards Liberty, you could see parts of the building and everything like that, but I didn't get down there yet, by the Millennium Hotel. I wanted to make a diligent search of the area.

Q. Did you find a lot of people?

A. I kept zigzagging back and forth and checked out all emergency vehicles on the street. I kept

W. QUICK

looking on the Church Street side of the -- between four and five building and kept walking down and looked between four and five and I didn't see any people. People started coming out and looking like what has happened just now. Everything like that. They were all emergency workers and some were workers from buildings and everything like that. In fact, there were two guys that came out, and there was an engine parked probably on Dey Street or something like that, and there was an ambulance on fire.

So these two civilians started -- you know, to grab a hose to put it out. I walked off and searched the ambulance that was on fire and looked around. I looked up at the building and I was like, you know, the first one collapsed, maybe the second one could collapse.

I said listen guys, forget this ambulance. It's in the middle of the street. It's not a priority. I know you mean well. I said just look for victims laying in the street. They put down the hose. I said just look around for people. Everyone had this look of disbelief on their faces.

Q. Did you see the second building?

A. I could see the second building still

W. QUICK

burning.

Q. The other one, it was totally gone?

A. Totally gone. The smoke cleared up, just smoke laying over the rubble, over the ruins. I kept walking down. I kept zigzagging on the street, kept going back and forth. That way I wouldn't miss anybody across the street or on the other side. I was like, I would say I met those two guys on Church Street and I met maybe another three or four people on Church Street as I was walking down.

Q. That was it?

A. That was it. People coming out of the woodwork, just looking, you know. I kept walking back and forth, like I said, making searches. I made it all the way down to the Millennium Hotel where I just got in front of the Millennium Hotel. When I got in front of the Millennium Hotel, all of a sudden I had my back to the towers. All of a sudden I heard the rumble again. This time, I figured, I just started running up the steps of the Millennium Hotel. And all the windows were taken out on the bottom.

Q. They were already out, right?

A. They were already out. What it was was a men's clothing store in there. I remembered the old

W. QUICK

football thing. You know, if you are getting chased by a guy, don't look back because it wastes time. So I was just like I'm not looking back, I'm just running. I had surgery on my left knee, so I'm still a little injured. I'm still not hundred percent running. So I just kept running, running, running, and dove into a building. I looked at the building and there was two gigantic pillars in the building. I went right behind a pillar and as soon as I went behind the pillar, darkness set in again.

Q. Same scenario?

A. Same scenario. This time I'm in the building all by myself. I am in there and pulled my coat up and get behind the pillar. Covered, same thing. Having a talk with myself. Come on, you can survive. You know, hang in there. Breathe, breathe in your coat, breathe here. I'm coughing a little bit. This time --

Q. Did you feel that intense heat this time too?

A. I didn't feel the intense heat, but this time the smoke lasted longer. Maybe because I was inside the building or what have you, but the smoke lasted more than ten minutes and I was down on the floor. I would say at least 15 minutes. Like that. I kept looking at my watch, like how long can I breathe and

W. QUICK

everything else like that. I kept going for breaths in the armpit of my arm and breathing in there and breathing through my hood.

The smoke finally cleared. When the smoke finally cleared where I could see stuff around me, I walked out to the steps and it was still charged, still smoke. All of a sudden a guy came up to me, I think he was a fire patrol, because he had a red helmet on. He said "Who are you? " I said Billy Quick. He said "I have heard of you. I will stay with you. I have a good chance of staying alive with you." So I was like all right. Stay with me. I stood on the steps of the Millennium Hotel for 25 minutes because the smoke was so heavy and it took so long to get out, for it to get out of the street and everything.

From the steps of the Millennium Hotel, the wreckage that I saw was right across. These are the steps, that's the handrail and this is the wreckage that I saw. Famous wreckage there.

Q. That's all that was left?

A. That's all that was left.

Q. Pile of rubble on top.

A. There was heavy smoke all through this area.

I just stood there. I then, like, I was like oh, if I

W. QUICK

go in the pile and start searching for people and they send another plane I can't move out there, I'm a sitting duck. That's why I waited on the steps for 25 minutes. In that 25 minutes I overlooked everything. Same thing, you know, people just coming out of the woodwork very slowly, very cautiously. You know, looking around, looking for people.

Finally after that, I remember looking at my watch. It was like 12 o'clock. So I guess I stood on the steps a little longer than what it really was. It was 11 o'clock. It was like the top of the hour. I set off and walked across the street. I walked on all these ruins, all the way to Liberty Street and I came back to Church. In the middle of Church, all of a sudden a black fireman from 10 engine came walking up. This guy had the thousand mile stare. He was just like -- I said, how you doing. He just, he couldn't say anything. I said all right, listen, stop, open up your coat, okay, open up your bunker pants, okay, do you know where your company is? He just shook his head. I go all right. I was like, all right. I said from here, do you know where your fire house is? He said "Yes". I said I want you to go to your fire house and just stay there. That's all I want you to do. He was

W. QUICK

a young guy. He was black and I could tell from his helmet that he was pretty new but he wasn't a proby. That was the last I saw of him.

So then I just went from -- I stayed on the Church side and I went from building four and I searched in building four and was going into offices looking for people. The building started -- was on fire, and the building just started getting engulfed in flames. I was making searches just as the fires were starting.

Q. Where were you in the building?

A. First, second, third floor. I made it up through the rubbish into the building. I started looking for people in there too. The place was so vast. I figured I would just stay on Church and just work that area. Go back from four to five.

Q. Did you find anybody?

A. Didn't find anybody. Not in the buildings. Not in the middle of these two buildings. I got to five building and I went inside and yelled for people. No people at all. I kept walking back. I finally left about 6, 6:30 that night. Just like totally exhausted. My car was parked here, Church and Vesey. My car got totaled. It got wrecked. Windows were

W. QUICK

smashed out of it, the front grille was all smashed. My insurance company totaled it. They were like that's it. So I lost my vehicle.

Q. Did you come across anybody after that time while you were, you know, for those couple of hours --

A. I didn't come across any civilians, any victims, any body parts.

Q. -- any supervisors or anybody else?

A. No --

Q. Independent pretty much?

A. Independently just going around searching. I was the first one on this pile looking for victims. I know that for a fact, because I was the only one walking out there. Then all of a sudden ESU cops came and they started towards the outskirts like that. Then after that when I left them, I just walked out and I said I bet nobody searched these buildings. That's when I went in the building and I started searching four and five.

I had been through a lot and it was pretty late. After hours of being there I just sat down. I had been through the mill here. I said I'm on vacation. So I guess I will head home now. I called my wife from inside. There were other people inside

W. QUICK

the clothing store with me at the Liberty hotel there, Liberty plaza. Millennium Hotel. The security guard, he was like do you guys want to call home, tell them you are all right. I says yes, please. I got in touch with my wife and I said I'm okay.

From there I just worked nine days straight down there. That's --

Q. Did you touch base with your officer at 134 at all?

A. I came back and I told him I was down there for the collapse. In fact on my cell phone I called my wife saying listen, I'm going in, there was a plane hit. I have to go in. She goes you are on vacation. I says yes, well, that's the way it is. That policeman saved my life. The one that came out and said I need help here. I said I'm here to help. I don't care who it is. That was a big factor right there. I would have been around the corner in this area too, going towards the building, just like every other man. That's the way it is gentlemen. I hope your news is good news. I hope that helps you a little.

MR. McCOURT: Time is 8:45. Concluding this interview. For the record the interview started at 8:20. Thank you very much.

File No. 9110185

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DANIEL LYNCH

Interview Date: October 31, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

D. LYNCH

MR. TAMBASCO: I'm Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force. We are in the main conference room on the fourth floor at Metrotech in BITS. The time is 1632 hours.

Q. The subject of the interview today is?

A. Firefighter Daniel Lynch, assigned to Ladder company 7. I'm presently detailed to the Fire Commissioner's office as an aide to the Fire Commissioner.

Q. Would you be good enough to just tell us your story right from the beginning.

A. On the morning of September 11, I was on my way to the medical office. I was not on duty that day. I live on Staten Island. I was just about at the Verrazano Bridge when I heard a radio report that there was a fire at the World Trade Center. I changed radio stations to a news station, at which point I heard that there was a plane crash and they were interviewing civilians that had witnessed it. There were several different accounts; small plane, large plane, so on and so forth.

It became apparent that it was a large plane. By the time I got on to the Verrazano Bridge, I certainly could see that there was a large fire going

D. LYNCH

on at the World Trade Center. There was a large amount of smoke coming from that area. I was continuing on to go to the medical office, which is at Fire Department headquarters.

At some point in the radio broadcast they had mentioned that another plane had hit the other tower. I could visualize that from where I was on the Gowanus. Traffic was starting to build up. I got off the Gowanus and was taking the side streets. Along the side streets I remember not only traffic being heavy, but large amounts of people coming out of the subway stations. Everything seemed to be kind of quiet. Kind of an amazing thing. I guess I imagined that it must have been like it might have been years ago during war time, you know.

Obviously after the second plane hit it was obvious to me and apparent to the news outlets that I was listening to that this was some type of a purposeful terrorist attack. Sometime in that trip I had heard over the radio that there was a total recall of all Fire Department personnel. I was on my way to headquarters anyhow, so there wasn't anything different that I would have done. I can recall just getting to the back of Metrotech. There is a -- on Flatbush

D. LYNCH

Avenue. A van in front of me stopped, a fire officer got out of the van because I believe it was Engine Company 236 was en route down Flatbush Avenue, towards the Manhattan Bridge. A fire officer waved the Engine Company down and asked if they could wait for him to get on while he parked his van. They said they would wait. He parked his van behind Fire Department headquarters, grabbed his gear and got on.

I checked into it in the next day or two and it was Lieutenant Edward D'Atri assigned to Squad one, who was lost in the World Trade Center. When I finally got into the building I went upstairs to the 8th floor, asked what to do, what we should be doing. Basically the only people that were left on the 8th floor were some of the secretarial staff with the exception of Mike Vecchi. Mike was not aware of anything in specific that we should be doing right now other than let's sit and wait and find some direction as to what might happen.

A short while later, somebody had said that the first building had collapsed and certainly was very much a surprise to myself and anybody else that was present. When that building collapsed we had not heard from any of the staff on the scene, anybody from Ray

D. LYNCH

Goldbach, the Commissioner's executive assistant, to the Commissioner, to the First Deputy Commissioner. Commissioner Fitzpatrick, Chief Ganci, Chief Nigro, anybody that I could think of that we would have heard from on the 8th floor they hadn't heard from yet.

I had made a determination that we needed to try to contact them in some fashion and I was in the process of getting a list of Nextel phone numbers so we could start to call them on the Nextel phone number. We didn't have the Nextel available to us to just beep them on the walkie talkie portion of the Nextel so I wanted the phone numbers.

In the process of procuring them, I ran into a Firefighter Patrick Cleary, who works in the press office. He was going to go over to the scene. Bear in mind that both myself and Pat Cleary were dressed in sneakers, shorts and T shirts. He said -- he asked me if we had any gloves around. I found a couple of pairs of work gloves in the Commissioner's office. I asked one of the secretaries up on the 8th floor if she could try to call as many people on the Nextel list as possible and has she got in contact or has anybody contacted her to start to develop a list of those people. At least we would start with some type of

D. LYNCH

tracking point for senior staff, I guess was the thought in my head. Pat Cleary had in mind that he had to track down Commissioner Gribbon, who was his direct supervisor in the office of public information, who he had also not heard from.

We took the Commissioner's spare Suburban and headed over towards the site. As we crossed the Manhattan Bridge, there were numerous people walking across the bridge, obviously had been involved in the collapse of the first building. Some people with no shoes. Some people with -- certainly everybody was in disarray.

We drove down along Bowery to Park Row South and as we got closer to City Hall, it started to be the development of the dust that was still floating around. We got to the end of City Hall Park. There was certainly some traffic problems, some increased dust condition. There was some firefighters in different areas starting to muster up in the area and head down towards the World Trade Center plaza.

Traffic caused us to go north on Broadway to Murray Street. We attempted to get masks from several different ambulance services and finally on the corner of Murray Street and Broadway there was an ambulance

D. LYNCH

there that had a couple of extra masks for us.

Just as we got the masks and were trying to figure out what we were going to do next as far as head in what direction, we started to hear a rumble that was about a thousand times more intense than the sound of the subway that runs underneath the ground, but something similar to that. Like I said, a thousand times more intense. With that, somebody came running around the corner and I always make the comment that I don't think his feet were touching the ground. To me I would assume it was a police officer. He had a badge around his neck. He was holding a handkerchief over his mouth and he was saying run run run, the building is coming down. There were some other people behind him. The dust cloud was right behind them. We dove back into the Suburban. By the time we got the windows rolled up and the doors closed there was already a dust condition inside the vehicle and then it just was like several minutes of I say black snow, because the debris and the dust just kept coming down on us.

We really had no idea what we were going to do. Even if I had decided to drive the vehicle, if I knew that I was going straight up Broadway, then maybe we could get further away from the building, but there

D. LYNCH

was a vehicle blocking me and I couldn't do that, so it was just a matter of let's wait and see what happens. Afterwards, several days later I asked Pat Cleary what we did. For the most part we were just like oh, shit what are we going to do.

When the dust settled, we got -- proceeded to go down Murray Street across Church Street, across West Street, sorry that's West Broadway.

Q. West Broadway?

A. I think at one of the intersections of West Broadway possibly or possibly Greenwich Street, there was a fire truck there and we came up with the idea that maybe we could use some tools from the fire truck. It was Ladder 124's rig.

We got off. There wasn't much left on 124's rig because they had obviously taken a good portion of their own tools with them. But we did take one or two axes, there was a flashlight. We took a Herst tool. We took an oxygen bag and thermal imaging camera.

At that point I also ran into a Firefighter that I know from 4 Engine, who I believe was the MPO of 4 Engine that day. His name was Bob Humphrey. Bob was rattled to say the least. He mentioned that he thinks his rig was crushed. He thinks his guys were crushed.

D. LYNCH

He is not sure. He didn't know where he was going. I just mentioned to him make sure that somebody knows where you are, wherever you go make sure somebody knows that that's where you are.

We continued down in the Suburban down to West Street. When we got to West Street it was like a movie type of scene. There was about a foot half deep of paper and dust and any movement created more of a dust cloud. The first people we came across were several firefighters and Chiefs. The one Chief was Chief McNally, who I believe is a Deputy Chief. He was in the process of trying to set up a command post. We walked down further towards the site, which would be Barclay or Vesey Street. I think on the intersection of Vesey Street and West Street I saw Chief Hayden, a Deputy Chief from the First Division. Chief Hayden was aware of who I was because I know him, but certainly was also obviously rattled. Both of these two Chiefs were covered with dust, so they were certainly part of whatever happened.

We decided to continue down to look for anybody, the main mission being the senior staff, although anybody that was found. I had had the thermal imaging camera. I had looked around, there were fire

D. LYNCH

trucks crushed, fire trucks on fire, cars, trucks, not all on fire, but several on fire, large pieces of steel. I guess some of the sheathing from the building, I don't know if it's aluminum or what, but other types of metal. The foot bridge was down, which I think was considered the north foot bridge.

We had turned on the thermal imaging camera, made a pass underneath some rigs, underneath the walkway that was crushed down. I can remember looking under the walkway and seeing a crushed fire truck. I don't know what company it was, but the lights still being on even though it was crushed down.

At one point I ran into a firefighter -- a Fire Lieutenant I think from Rescue 1. Name I'm not sure of. At that point he had started to climb over some rigs and go into another area underneath that foot bridge and being that I didn't have any equipment at that time, I thought it best that I hand off the thermal imaging camera to him and go and try to procure equipment if I was going to stick around the scene any longer.

I do recall somebody being, I think what it might have been the top floor of 6 World Trade Center, which was also looked like it was from a movie set the

D. LYNCH

way it was devastated. From the top floor window, which would be the northwest corner and I do believe there was somebody with an apparatus making an attempt to possibly get a ladder up to that person. I don't know what the end result of that was.

When I walked back towards the corner of West Street and Vesey Street, I saw Commissioner Gribbon and Lieutenant McLaughlin, who also works in the Fire Commissioner's office. I proceeded to go inside what I guess is 3 World Financial Center, the American Express building, make a phone call on a pay phone to Fire Department headquarters where I told them that I had accounted for Commissioner Gribbon and Lieutenant McLaughlin and I was also informed by them that Commissioner Von Essen and Captain Goldbach were at the quarters of 24 Engine. I told the girl who answered the phone, who was Sandy, to make sure that she reached out to their wives and let them know that we had accounted for them.

I had also questioned them if they saw anyone else, such as Commissioner Feehan, Chief Ganci, Chief Nigro or Commissioner Fitzpatrick or Commissioner Tierney. They had said that they had seen them but they weren't quite sure whether they saw them after

D. LYNCH

both buildings had come down or not. I didn't make the assumption that they were accounted for at that point.

I was heading back up to Murray Street where the Suburban was parked and at that time I think told Lieutenant McLaughlin that I was going to go to 24 Engine and see what the boss was doing and see what he needed. At which point I walked back up to Murray Street. There were some more firefighters starting to gather at that point. Chief McNally was still there, I think a Chief, Mark Ferran was there, several people, Louis Garcia was there, Chief Garcia. At that point I said I'm going to go up to 24 Engine. I got in the vehicle and made my way up West Street to 24 Engine's quarters.

When I got to 24 Engine's quarters, the Mayor's people were there. The Fire Commissioner was there and his executive assistant, Ray Goldbach. They were having a little bit of a meeting behind one of the offices. I acknowledged them through the glass window. When he came out, he asked me what was going on. I told him what I had known, what I had just been previously said and that I had a vehicle here for him, what did he want to do. He said well, just stick around, let's see what we are going to do. There was a

D. LYNCH

brief press conference.

We went from 24 Engine's quarters to the Police Academy, where we started to set up a temporary command post or a command center I should say. Also with us at that time were 2 fire Marshals, Fire Marshal Mike Owney, who is now promoted to Lieutenant, and Rich -- I'm not sure what Rich's last name is. Somewhere along the lines they had come across Commissioner Von Essen and they had said to him if nobody is with you we will stick with you and be secured and he agreed to that and they did that.

At the command center on the 6th floor of the Police Academy, we had gotten some phones that we could utilize and we were starting to do whatever we possibly could as far as get information from the scene, get information from headquarters, kind of regroup in a way.

There was many meetings that the Commissioner and the Mayor had in and out of offices. I guess at one point the Governor showed up and some additional press conferences. I guess at one one point, some additional staff came, such as some of the other Commissioners' drivers and at one point when we first got there, being that I was in the shorts and T-shirt

D. LYNCH

when I first dropped the boss off and found out where we were and what we were doing, I told him that I was going to go get a uniform, so I stopped by my own fire house, which is Ladder company 7, a few blocks away from the Police Academy and I got my bunker gear and some work duty clothing.

Then I also went to Engine 39 where we parked the Commissioner's vehicle and I got my uniform and proceeded back down to the Police Academy. One thing that I noticed when I was going to 39 Engine, which is on 67 Street between Third and Lex, the New York City blood bank is on 67 Street between First and Second and there was a line all the way around the corner of people to donate blood. I felt that this thing had just happened minutes ago and I was kind of amazed at that, you know.

We went back down to the command center. Probably spent the next several hours going back and forth from the site to the command center for several different reasons. The possibility of some recoveries, to get information, to get some communication set up, whether it was by cellphone or by 800 megahertz radios. Communications I know it was a difficult situation in the beginning.

D. LYNCH

I believe it was about 10 o'clock at night, we were back down at the scene along with -- I can remember Chief Fellini being there and the Commissioner. It seemed like they were trying to gear up for whatever the tasks were going to be for the overnight. Lighting was an issue, we were getting some lighting, heavy equipment was an issue. That was coming in. I remember earlier in the day there was a meeting and I don't recall exactly who was there or where it was at, but we talked about how it was going to get dark fast and we needed equipment.

There were many issues about the amount of people that were there and how we could control them and the amount of apparatus that was there and how we could control that and certainly seemed to be a monumental task in the late hours of that day, but the early stages of the whole operation.

That's pretty much a good synopsis of the first day. I think by the time we finished up that first day it was probably around 2 or 3 a.m. By the time we dropped the Commissioner off and tried to get some semblance of what we needed to do from our standpoint of view as the Commissioner's aides. Picked them up the following morning at 6 a.m. and that became

D. LYNCH

a routine for about seven days. I think that's pretty much it as far as that first day.

Q. Anything else you would like to add to it, just --

A. The only thing it's something that I'm sure many people have said and I just recall that those first -- those first minutes from the time that sound started, the rumbling started to occur and the dust started to fall and then stopped to get gear and equipment from the fire truck and then continue down to West Street and getting there and seeing the crushed fire trucks, crushed cars, vehicles on fire. It was like a movie set.

It was amazing and the people that I did see and I didn't see anybody that was hurt physically at least serious. But all the people I saw certainly were rattled, understandably rattled, but because might not have been able to get the answer that you wanted out of them, you know, but understandably.

As time went on we had heard of some of the fatalities and we were hopeful in many cases about certain people that unfortunately didn't pan out. I guess Father Judge and Commissioner Feehan and Chief Ganci were the first three majors that came across and

D. LYNCH

what can we say about that, you know. It was obvious from early on to us that the toll on the Department, whatever the numbers might have been at that time in anybody's head, it was going to be heavy. Certainly knew that it was something that the Department, nobody could have ever believed was happening. Oh well.

Before September 11, yes, yes, sure, that will never happen. After September 11 I think we all know that anything can happen.

MR. TAMBASCO: All right then. I thank you for your interview. The interview concludes at 1656 hours.

File No. 9110219

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MARK RUPPERT

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 4th, 2001. The time is 11:45. I am Lieutenant Chief Art Lakiotes here at the command of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER RUPPERT: Mark Ruppert.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: -- Firefighter Mark Ruppert regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Mark, if you would, just take me through the time you got on the rigs, responded and what transpired during this event.

A. We got to the box about 10 to 9. We went to a staging area outside the Battery Tunnel with about five other companies that met us there, 101 being one of them, and 202 and 205.

We were watching the tower burn when the second one hit. We actually saw the second one hit and the plane burst into flames. Not even a minute later we were sent in to the box. So we went through the tunnel.

After we got through the tunnel, we pulled up right in front of the building, weaving

in and out of the other trucks. We got a spot out in front there. We got out and we said, you know what -- the chauffeur pulled the rig around the corner. There were so many rigs there already.

We went across the street, across West Street, and we were waiting there. As we were waiting there -- well, you don't want to know about the bodies jumping. You know all that.

Q. Whatever you feel like talking about, just tell me.

A. We were there for about 15 minutes, 10, 15 minutes. Then we got orders to follow up. So we went under the overpass. We crossed Liberty, went under the overpass and then proceeded into the lobby of the Marriott, crossing Liberty.

As we entered the lobby, we entered it through the bar area. Then we went into the lounge area which connected, from what I understand, to tower one and tower two.

We were told to get comfortable because we were going to be there a while. Some got real comfortable. I left my bunker pants on and took them off when I -- I think I left my coat in

there. I took my coat off because it was hot, took the tank off, put our tools down. I went to use the bathroom, got something to drink there. They had water set up. There was a lot of companies in the lobby there.

Q. What time was that? Do you have any idea how many guys were in that lobby at that time? 10? 20? 30? 40?

A. I would definitely say between 75 and 100, I would say. It was full. The whole lobby was --

Q. Full of firefighters?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. Lieutenant Wood went to the command post staging area for instructions?

A. Yeah. Let's see. He took a walk down there, down the lobby, and came back and said -- actually when we went that way, he told us to go to the bathroom, try to use the phone, which I tried but I didn't get through on my phone call. We used the bathroom, whatever.

When I got back, he was back. He said, "All right, we're going to go down to --" I thought he said we're going to go to work. I

thought we were going to go relieve companies up there. He said we're going to go to a staging area down in the other tower, the north tower.

Basically just at that time I had my -- I got my coat back on. I had my mask in my hand. I was about to put it on my back and --

Q. You started hearing a noise?

A. No, no. Looking out the window -- I was facing the window, and I saw everybody running.

Q. Gary said the same thing. You knew something was going on.

A. I yelled. I said, "Everybody run. Something is going on." We were basically looking out and you saw everybody running. Then you look up. You hear rumbling. You hear something. So you look up and we saw the reflection of the building across the street. We knew something was coming down.

Then we just said hit the deck. Everybody was running towards the back of the lobby. We ran into an area where we were -- we were running kind of towards the bar area where we came in. So I guess instinct tells you to go

the way you came in, so instinct.

You felt it all coming. You felt the rumbling. You heard it hitting the floor. Then it was just that hit and the wind came and was blowing us. Back into the bar area is where it blew us. Somewhere along the line a rolldown gate came down between the lobby and the bar, and we realized that was the only way out after a few minutes of being in there. We didn't know what was in there. We lifted the gate up to get out.

What were you going to say? You were going to say something?

Q. I was running down Liberty. I was one of the guys you saw running, because we could see it actually happening. We looked up -- see, I'm surprised -- what was in my mind and I could never forget it is the noise it made.

A. Yeah.

Q. It was like a train --

A. A freight train.

Q. -- going over my head. When Gary said that you thought you heard something, it really was incredible. He didn't hear what we heard. We knew he was right under it, but we heard from

the outside.

A. Did you hear the snapping on that? Did you hear the floor snapping? After the first one came, we wound up going across the street. We wound up -- we were going where the windows were. We were going out that way. We didn't realize we were out of the building until we were in the middle of West Street, basically. There was a crevice that we were climbing down and all this steel --

Q. What was the visibility like?

A. It was very hazy, very thick. But you could see. You look back and you couldn't really see the building -- anything. But once you were across the street, you look and you see the structure, steel sticking up still.

Then when we were across the street -- as we were going, there was a guy in a bush. He might have been a reporter of some kind. David something. I grabbed someone else and said, "Let's get this guy." We pulled him across the street, and we took him with us into -- there was a deli over there. We put him in there.

Then as we said what are we going to do

now, what are we going to do with this guy,
what's our next move, that's when the second
building -- I guess 10 minutes later? 15 minutes
later? I don't know. It seemed like that much.

But then we saw the other one coming
down. Part of you wanted to keep looking because
it was like holy cow. You could hear it going
"kachoo, kachoo, kachoo." Now outside it's total
hysteria, and you had time because it's this big
building. You had -- I don't know, how long did
it take? Looking at it we said we better get in.

We started running. We realized we've
got to get cover. We all started diving into
this store, pushing each other in, pushing a guy
and he's pushing you. You get in there, and it's
basically the same thing. That wind was blowing
and debris messed that building up. All the
windows were broken in the front of the building.
We thought we were buried in there. Somebody
started panicking, and somebody took over and
told them to shut the hell up.

Q. That bad?

A. Yeah.

Then somebody walked outside and said

let's see if we can get outside. It was clear. You couldn't see anything, but we could walk out and we weren't buried. The dust was settling.

We grabbed that guy again and we pulled him down West Street to the water, and they took him in the boat. Then we walked along the water to where they were evacuating people. We got a bunch of people on. Everybody was standing around. Finally officers said, "You guys, we're going to go now."

That's basically it.

Q. You don't know how much time you have on the job? I asked your chief about it, but I don't remember.

A. I have like three years.

Q. Okay. So don't know of anybody you saw in the lobby except for your own company?

A. I remember seeing guys from 101.

Q. You do?

A. Yeah.

Q. At what point in time do you remember seeing them?

A. I saw them on the outside of the tunnel when we met there. Then we pulled into 101. I

know the faces. I think it was a guy from 122. I saw 122 in there. 101, I'm pretty sure they were down in front. We were in the lobby. They went down further, and we were on this side.

Q. You were more towards the Liberty Street side?

A. We were more towards Liberty, yeah, and they were in front of there. There was dozens of firemen. I don't know why at that point -- I know after we came down and I was walking out and I couldn't find my helmet and my tools. I was kicking a helmet, so I shook it off, I put it on my head, and I went out, thinking it was mine.

A guy when I was outside, he said, "You're from 58?" I said, "No, I just found this helmet." I didn't even know what number was on it. He said, "That's my helmet." So whether it was or not, he got his helmet back. So I know 58 was in there.

Q. You didn't see anybody from 101 after that?

A. No, no. After that it was who was with us there. Basically it was guys from our company. There was a pedestrian or two. That

was about it, really. I can't hardly remember. I know it was us from our company. There were a few other firefighters, that guy there from 58. That's it. I can't remember anybody else being with us there. There weren't too many with us. There were about 10, 12 guys there, maybe. That's it.

Q. Your memory is better than mine, believe me.

A. Part of you starts searching, thinking you're going to find tools, find my helmet, any other guys. It was just such a mess.

Q. How was the visibility?

A. They said we're going out, everybody out, grab people and we're going out.

Q. How was the visibility in the lobby of the hotel after the collapse?

A. It was settling. It was like a thick smoke. It was thick. It was a thick dust. You could see. It was settling. At first you couldn't see a thing. I was worried about breathing. I couldn't see. I had my hood over. Good thing I had the hood. I had that over my mouth, and I was breathing through that. You're

kicking a lot of dust and dirt and papers.

Everybody looked like a statue. All you could see was the guys and the mouth.

Q. The eyes were all red.

A. Yeah. It seemed like everybody was going "blah" with their mouth and spitting. We went to the guy across the street and we kind of tried to towel up, get the junk out. It was bad, but you could see. It was like a thick fog. You could actually see to get to walk. You could see in front of you.

I wish --

Q. You did fine.

A. I'm pretty aware of when I go to jobs I look at different companies that are there.

Q. Sure.

A. I just wish I would have a little more --

Q. Let me tell you, it was traumatic for everybody that was there. A lot of us don't remember a lot that went on.

Okay. Thank you.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: This concludes the interview. It is approximately 12:00.

File No. 9110220

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD DAVIS

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

E. DAVIS

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 4, 2001. The time is approximately 11:10. This is Chief Art Lakiotes of the Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD DAVIS: Firefighter Edward Davis.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Who was assigned to Battalion 32. Regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Eddie, just take me through your response to the World Trade Center and what transpired after that.

A. Responded to the World Trade Center with the 21 Battalion. The 32 Battalion car was at the rock. Responded with them, arrived about 2 minutes prior to the first collapse, which I believe was the south tower. Upon that collapse, was upon the scene also for the second collapse, and conducted a search and attempted rescue from that point on.

Q. Did you see anybody else that was there that may have not made it, can you think of anybody?

A. Can't think of anybody that didn't make it. Ladder 101 was there, but I hadn't seen any of them prior to my arrival other than being in the fire house

E. DAVIS

before the start of our tours.

Q. Everyone you saw in that area, myself included, you saw afterwards?

A. That's correct, sir.

Q. There is no way of telling where anybody was that didn't make it at that point?

A. That's correct.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Okay Ed. Thank you.

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD DAVIS: Okay, Chief.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: This concludes the interview at approximately 11:15.

File No. 9110221

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ERIC BERNTSEN

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

E. BERNTSEN

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 4, 2001. The time is 1300 hours. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes of the Safety Command. I am conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER BERNTSEN: Eric Berntsen.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: -- Firefighter Eric Berntsen regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Eric, would you just mind telling me in your own words, from the time you responded, exactly where and what and how the day unfolded for you.

A. Okay. We heard the explosions from the kitchen. We went up on the roof and got there just in time to see the second plane hit the towers. So we figured we would be going on that. So we ran downstairs. By the time we got down to the apparatus floor, we got the ticket. It was about five after 9:00. I jumped on the rig. I was an extra man. The dispatcher came over and announced to bring the extra man. I was supposed to be detailed to 205, but I called to quarters and they said they were out, so I jumped on the rig.

We went down to the Trade Center. On the way there, we experienced a lot of traffic. We went over

E. BERNTSEN

the Brooklyn Bridge, came down Church Street, made a right onto Liberty, and parked near 10 and 10's quarters, on the opposite side, on 10 and 10's side of Liberty. We grabbed the rollups and an extra bottle and walked down Liberty towards West Street. When we got to the corner of West Street, we made a right and I ran into the Marriott. We stopped underneath the pedestrian bridge where a lot of guys were using that for shelter, so we didn't get hit by anything coming down, bodies, et cetera.

We ran into the Marriott and stayed by the security desk there. The officer went off, got orders from a Chief, and we were told to go to the 74th floor of the south tower. He came back, told us what we were doing. We gathered the company together, started heading north through the Marriott. Then we made a right and went down the ramp to get to the concourse level.

We headed eastbound in the concourse level to where it first turns up to the left, where the mall turns up to the left, up north, and we got to that corner and the officer told us to wait there. Instead of carrying the stuff all around, he was going to try to find a staircase or the best way we could get up.

E. BERNTSEN

He walked away. He went west in the concourse and talked to a security guy. He was, I guess, about 100 feet away from us, maybe more.

That's when we heard the building start shaking. I looked up into the Marriott, because you could see up into it from where we were standing, and just saw black, like dust. I saw stuff falling off the ceiling and I saw just black dust coming down. I turned and I ran a couple of steps west, a couple of steps east, and then we turned up north, up into the concourse, because I didn't see anything falling in that area at that time. So I felt that was the safest direction to go. I jumped into a corner. The lights went out. I jumped into a corner under an archway. I thought maybe that might provide some better support. I just held my helmet. I figured we were going to get like a pancake collapse on top of us.

After the building stopped shaking and there was no rumbling noise any more, Vinny Picciano of 212 regrouped the company by saying 212, regroup, get back. 212, where are you? We all got back together. We all turned on our lights. We talked to the civilians, told them to keep quiet, to stay calm, don't yell or scream, everybody stay calm, we are going to

E. BERNTSEN

get out of here. We asked if anybody knew how to get out. Me and this guy who was with us, he said he knew how, but he couldn't really see too much. He looked like he was blinded by the dust. We just walked store to store. He was asking us what store do you see? We told him all the stores and we just headed north through the concourse and came out in between the PATH and the number 1 and number 9 line. There is an exit there that comes out into building 5. It comes out on the exterior of building 5, which leaves you off in the middle of Vesey Street, between Church and West Broadway.

We got out, myself and Jimmy Murphy, who was detailed to 212 from 220 Engine. We chocked the doors outside, went back in, told all the people this is an exit. We had about 50 civilians with us. We told them to exit out that way. We made kind of like a chain with lights, with flashlights, so they could see where they were going to get them out. Once everybody was out, we went back in and we started searching.

We tried to give a Mayday for our officer because our officer wasn't with us. We couldn't find him. We went back in and we searched the stores, searched the PATH. There were some more people still

E. BERNTSEN

in there. I remember a guy from the GAP. He was the manager. I asked if anybody was in there. He said no, he was the last guy to leave. So we got him out. We found a guy, probably in his mid 40s, bald head, or short crew cut hair, under the concrete. We picked him up, put him in a chair and carried him out.

When we got out on to Vesey, there was a Port Authority cop with us and he said that they were given reports that the second building was going to come down. So we made a decision we'd better leave. We came out of the door on Vesey Street. We were exhausted from carrying this gentleman who was pretty heavy, we estimated about 300 pounds, 275. It took six guys to carry him. We were all exhausted. We were changing. We didn't know if we could get him out of there before this building was going to come down, so we put him down for a second, took a breath, and made a decision to just go for it and pick him up. We made it a couple of steps and then we heard the rumble and we knew the second tower was coming down. Everybody let go of the guy and ran. There was no talking, no looking. You just went.

Q. What direction?

A. There was a cop, NYPD, I'm pretty sure it was

E. BERNTSEN

an NYPD guy, and Vinnie Picciano were in front of me. We were facing north. We didn't even reach the sidewalk. We didn't even get off the sidewalk in front of building 5. I saw them run forward, north, heading across the street.

Q. Up West Broadway?

A. Across Vesey Street from where building 5 is. Directly straight across Vesey Street towards the Federal Office Building, the Post Office. Vinnie and the cop jumped under a car. Vinnie Picciano jumped up on top of him. There was no room for me there and I thought I could make it a little bit further than that. So once I hit the sidewalk on the Federal Building, on Vesey, I turned right, which had me east on Vesey Street, and I started running. Then I looked up and I saw a dark cloud and I grabbed my helmet.

The force knocked me down, blew me. I don't know how far I went, but I went forward pretty far. It knocked the wind out of me. I got covered with debris and just kept my hands on my helmet. Something pretty big hit me and knocked my helmet off. I felt a blast and just a lot of pressure when it hit me. So I had no helmet. I put my hands back on top of my head and I felt debris hit me. I felt weight piling up on my back

E. BERNTSEN

and I figured I was going to be under what I thought was about 10 feet of rubble.

When it all stopped, I said what do I do now? I said, well, I can't breathe. Let me get my mask on. I got my mask out. I didn't realize my bottle wasn't on. So I couldn't reach it because I was face down, and I kind of gave up. Then I was still laying there. I said I can't just lay here. I said let me get out of here. Let me see how deep I am, see what I can do. I remember saying I have no radio, this fucking job, I can't get any kind of radio.

When I pulled myself out from this debris that was on my back and my legs, I was up against the wall of the Federal Building, and then I realized it was still pitch black. I said I must be in a big void because it was pitch black and I couldn't see anywhere.

Then, as it started lightening up a little bit, I started using my light. I was able to see over the top of the debris around me. I could see up the wall a little bit. I realized, holy shit, I'm free. I'm not buried. I got up. I took a step and just collapsed because I had no energy. I got up again, took two more steps and collapsed. Then a cop picked

E. BERNTSEN

me up and helped me walk up to Church. I made a left on Church and there was a car on fire on the corner.

Maybe 50 feet, 100 feet up Church, I saw Vinnie Picciano, who was under the car with that cop. He was stumbling around. He had a bad gash on the back of his head. There was blood coming out from the back of his turnout coat. He was a little dizzy and disoriented. He asked me to look at his cut. I told him it's all right. You will be okay. I didn't really think so, but what are you going to tell him at that point? I said you got a good cut, but you're going to be all right.

We walked up Church, made a right on to Barclay and dropped our masks and continued up to Broadway and got to I guess it was Park Place maybe and Broadway. We got into the back of an ambulance and got Vinnie's head checked out. Then we left the ambulance because there were secondary collapses. I was hearing secondary collapses and I didn't know how far away we were. I didn't know how much of the building came off. I said I want to get out of here, as far away from this place as possible.

We headed north and got to Duane Street. I said, oh, the 7 and 1 is over here. We made a left and

E. BERNTSEN

we walked into the quarters. Three guys that were in the company, Jimmy Murphy, Joe Galasso, Danny Walker, they were all standing there.

Q. What company are they in?

A. 212. Same company. Me and Vinnie thought they were dead because we were the only two that walked in. We only saw each other on Church. They must have came out before us, after us, you know. What happened is they ran back into World Trade Center 5. Me and Vinnie and the cop ran forward. So they were okay, but they got beat up with the debris. They got tossed around, blown off their feet. So we had everybody except the officer and the chauffeur. We didn't know where the chauffeur was because we were on the complete opposite side now.

We saw a Chief. We let the Chief know that these guys were missing. So we regrouped and from 7 and 1 we took an ambulance to Jamaica Hospital, Queens. That's most of my recollection.

Q. The Lieutenant and the chauffeur?

A. They were alive. The chauffeur got blown down I don't know what street. Somewhere.

Q. He was with the rig?

A. Yes, he was with the rig. The officer made

E. BERNTSEN

it out with some of the guys from 238. I don't know how they got out. I don't know which direction they went in.

Q. I'll try to get an interview with him.

A. Yes. But he made it out and he was with Lieutenant Glenn Wilkinson. They were trying to come back, to get back into the building, because he knew we were in there, and they were trying to get a mask. By the time they got masks for each of them, they lost it after the collapse. They were tangled and stuff. They dropped it. I don't know about looking for my officer.

Q. What was his name?

A. Neil Brosnan.

Q. Did you notice any other companies in the lobby of the Marriott when you were in there?

A. No, I didn't. The only person I saw that I recognized was Chuck Margiotta and he was asking everybody if they had an extra mask for a Chief.

Q. His unit is?

A. I don't know what unit he was working in that day. I believe he was assigned to 85 Truck, but I don't know where he was working that day.

Q. You saw him in the lobby?

A. I saw him in the lobby.

E. BERNTSEN

Q. Do you remember how far down in the lobby off of Liberty, off the staircase? A hundred feet down?

A. About 100 feet down. I saw him there, but then he left. I don't know how far he went, but I saw him headed north.

Q. Towards tower 1?

A. Right. Towards the north tower. I saw him headed that way.

Q. How many guys do you think were in the lobby at that point when you got there; 20, 50, 100, crowded?

A. At least 50. Probably over 10, maybe 15 companies, 12 companies, something like that. There were Chiefs. I saw a couple of Chiefs who were just kind of walking through. I don't remember who they were.

Q. What happened to the rig? Did the rig survive?

A. The rig survived. It got beat up, the windows blown out, a little fire damage, not that much.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Okay. Very good. Excellent. This concludes the interview. It is now 1320.

File No. 9110222

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER VINCENT MASSA

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is December 4th, 2001. The time is 4:44. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the safety battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Vincent Massa, firefighter first grade of Engine 64.

Q. Tell me what happened on September 11th.

A. I was working that day. It was regular code work fire house. I saw on the news that the planes had hit, and about five minutes after the second plane hit they sent us to a staging area at 35 Engine and home with a rig. I had the control position. I had a radio.

We got on the rig, gathered everything we thought we would need, flashlights and extra clothes and stuff, because we knew it would be crazy and we'd be there at least a day. We went down Bruckner Boulevard towards 35 Engine, which is in Harlem. You could see the towers burning while driving down the Bruckner.

On the way down there, we were listening to the radio. I believe we switched over to the Manhattan frequency. As we were

going down the Bruckner, you heard the dispatcher -- it seemed like a Manhattan dispatcher, unless he had us on citywide -- talking to the units that were at the scene. You heard different things going on.

The dispatcher announced that elevators were dropping. I remember them saying at first to stay out of one of the elevators that serviced the 44th floor. Then less than a minute later they said not to use any elevators. This is as we're driving down the Bruckner, things we were hearing on the radio. He said to stay out of all elevators because the elevators were dropping. We knew that there was something crazy going on.

As we were approaching closer to Harlem, we got out of sight of the buildings. I remember hearing different things. I remember hearing "major collapse" on the radio. That's one thing that threw me about the whole thing was that when we got to the scene we didn't know what had happened exactly.

To jump ahead a little bit, when we got to the scene, we got there between the two collapses. We had no idea that the first

building was already completely down. All we heard on the radio was major collapse, and we figured the top fell off. So we heard elevators are dropping, then we heard major collapse, then we heard the dispatcher calling out for anybody and nobody was answering. A few minutes later we heard a chauffeur from one of the rigs screaming, screaming that he was trapped and screaming, and then it cut out. [REDACTED]

We got to Harlem, and we joined up on the ticket -- we went on the fifth alarm, one of the fifth alarms; I don't remember which one. We went with five or six other Bronx engine companies that were meeting with 35 Engine in Harlem. There was 35, us, 64, 83 Engine, 68 Engine, 94 Engine and 50 Engine. We all met up with 35 Engine. We were there. They were gathering tools up. We were waiting for the other engine companies to come in.

Once everybody got in, we started aligning like, it's a funny thing but we ended up leading the pack. It was a convoy. I figured 35 would end up leading the pack, but we ended up leading. Circumstances brought us to put our rig

in the front, and we ended up leading.

So we were waiting in house 35. You could hear everything that was going on. They were calling us. They were trying to get like a roll call of us, exactly what companies were there. They said they were waiting for other companies to show up before sending us and telling us where to report to down at the site.

Once everybody was there, they got everybody accounted for, we started heading down. It turns out we bought ourselves some time which probably saved our lives because our chauffeur was leading. Instead of going right to the West Side Highway, because he could have gone right around the block to the west side, we shot straight down. I remember him telling us on the way there that the west side was wide open. He had gone down Third Avenue and down through Central Park and through construction. It bought us like ten minutes.

Once we got down there, we got down to the West Side Highway. There were other companies behind us. Some of the companies split off and pulled ahead of us. We had a covering

officer that day. He told us to park in a certain spot, and it was maybe about four blocks north on West Street. We were to report to the command post on West and Vesey or the West Street command post.

We got all our stuff, got out of the rig and were getting ready. Our chauffeur didn't have a mask, so the boss told him to stay behind, to stay with the rig, in case he needed to move the rig to use it for anything.

At this point, like I said, we didn't know that one tower had come down. We were all there trying to see what was there, and we couldn't tell. We thought it was there, but we couldn't see it because of the smoke and the dust and everything. It turned out it wasn't there. The second one was still standing, the north tower.

So we got our equipment and we started walking down, and we got to somewhere between three-quarters to a half a block away, within a block, when the north tower came down. We were walking down with the companies we were with. 94 Engine was there. I remember seeing the guys

from 94 with us. They all made it out.

So as we were walking up, we had our rollups and stuff. I don't know what we planned on doing with them, but we figured we were going to go operate somehow. We were supposed to report to the command post.

As we got like a half a block away, you could hear a gigantic rumble. It sounded like a jet flying overhead. Everybody immediately looked up, and you could see just a big cloud of dust coming down to the ground. I didn't see the actual top of the building coming down, but you knew what it was.

So we looked up, and there was probably about a 30-story tidal wave of crap coming down West Side Highway. As soon as we saw it, everyone stopped, looked for a second, and it took everybody a couple seconds for it register what was going on and that we had to get the hell out of there.

We were standing there -- we were fairly close, not as close as other guys. We had our masks. I had a radio. We had our masks. I had tools in my pocket, what I thought we needed

to hook up with, like gloves, a monkey wrench, an adapter that was going to carry the whole thing up 80 flights.

We were standing there, and somebody yelled "run." We were all looking and whatever guys were in the street, it was like a sea of guys from all the companies that were down there. There were a few civilians down there. We just turned around and were just running down West Side Highway as fast as we could, running, looking over your shoulder. We were watching this cloud of shit chasing us down the street.

I hit the ground after running maybe a block, probably not even, maybe half a block. I remember I got past the last intersection. We walked a block, and I ran and I crossed through that intersection that was a block away that was in between there until -- I remember looking before it hit us to see where I was, and I was like close to another intersection.

I went to my knees, put my mask on, and the cloud of shit hit us, like little bits of rubble. There wasn't anything big at that point because we were far enough away, I guess. I had

stuff hitting my helmet, "dung, dung, dung." It just got pitch-black. It went from a sunny day to just total blackness.

I was wearing my mask. I figured I was going to make a right and go behind the buildings. I wasn't near anything. A couple guys jumped behind cars. I wasn't near any cars or anything. I figured I'd make a right. It was pitch-black. Literally your hand could be on your face and you wouldn't see it.

So I stopped, took a few steps, made a deliberate right turn and then started walking straight to try and get behind the buildings, wearing my mask. I got about ten paces after making the turn to go to the right, and another fireman kind of like jumped on me, screaming. He dropped his mask. I think he was from 9 Engine. I'm not sure. 9 Truck or 9 Engine. I think it was 9 Engine. He had forgotten his mask. He had dropped his mask, and he was flipping out.

So I grabbed him. We walked a couple of paces. I had my hand out in front, trying to find something, just to get down some kind of protection or something. I brought him to the

ground, and I started giving him my mask. We were sharing my mask. We were sitting on the ground, and I let him take what he needed, I'd hold my breath and he gave it back and we were just going back and forth.

I'd say after about maybe a good five minutes it started lightening up. As it started to lighten up, he got up and was like, "Thank you, thank you, thank you. What's your name? What's your name? Where are you from?" Blah, blah, blah. I was like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah." I had to go. I have to find the rest of my guys.

Everything was covered with gray, everybody. Two, three inches of dust and crap on the ground, papers everywhere. I don't remember hearing anything on the radio all that time, nothing at all, really. Going down there I'm trying to remember if I remember hearing anything while we were walking towards it. I don't remember. Nothing jumps out that I remember hearing anything coming over the radio.

Q. Did you see anything, like the building, anything that -- a sign that it might be coming down or anything like that or no?

A. As we were walking down?

Q. Yeah.

A. No. Some of the guys that were walking were looking up. As it was coming down, I must have been looking straight ahead or down. I heard the rumble. By the time I looked up, it was just a big cloud of shit. You saw a cloud of stuff coming down, and almost like it turned a corner and was coming down the block.

We stood there looking at it -- you look at it to judge to see am I too close, am I all right here. If you could see it diminishing, then maybe you'll be all right, no problem, I'll be all right. But it was just getting bigger and bigger. Everyone just like "ah," and ran.

There was a lot of chaos on the radio after the dust lifted and it started getting light out. I remember listening out, and I made some calls to my officer, because I remember which direction they went in. Before we ran and split up, we all ran in a general direction. We all ran north.

After a while I was monitoring the radio to hear from him, and I called him on the

radio. I heard other things, people calling other people. I don't remember exactly. Nothing stands out. We hooked up together -- he told me where he was after I got him on the radio. He was underneath the overpass at Chambers. There's that overpass on West Street. So we met up over there.

Once we all got together, we started walking back in because we all wanted to try to get in and do something and get to a command post and see -- we had no idea what had happened. We figured there was still a command post. We figured we would go to the command post.

As we were heading down, everybody dropped their shit. We dropped all our rollups. I dropped my gloves, my wrench, everything. I had nothing but my mask, my helmet and my bunker gear. So I was concerned about if we're going to go in and we're going to do something, I've got to get a pair of gloves on.

I was scrounging around. There were tools and stuff all over the West Side Highway. It was completely covered with tools and gear and shit just everywhere. I scrounged up a pair of

gloves. As we were going in, we passed some rigs, we grabbed some stuff. I grabbed a halogen. I found the search rope.

We were just grabbing everything we could get our hands on as we were heading back in, because we figured we were going to be doing something with all the work.

As we started walking down, we figured we would try to find the command post. I remember we were walking down and we got to almost where we were when it came down, like within a half a block away or so, and I think Stuyvesant High School is on -- as you're walking south on West is on the right side by the water there.

There were reports coming over the radio that there was a secondary device in Stuyvesant High School, that there was a major gas leak and to evacuate the area. Everybody turned around and started heading north again. We were like, Jesus Christ, what the hell is next? Everybody was shell-shocked. We figured this building is going to explode now, you know.

So we started walking north again, and

we were still concerned about finding a command post. We stood there for a minute or two and we were like -- I don't know, this is bullshit, and let's start heading back in.

We started heading back in. We changed our bottles on the west side. Another reason we changed our bottles, we were trying to find a command post and there was none. I remember the officers all calling, trying to find out where to meet up. But there was no command post, so there was kind of chaos. Nobody knew where to go.

As we were waiting on the west side for something to do, I remember two fire marshals came up the block. They must have been close. They were totally covered with crap. Their pants were ripped. We had a box of flashlights. We sat there with them and put batteries in a couple cases of flashlights for them.

I'm trying to think if there's anything else worth noting. I can't remember. We helped them. We hung out. Then they came up with the command post at West and Chambers near the underpass. So we started heading back there.

When we got back there, we hooked up

with -- they gave us an assignment to stretch a line from the water -- there was a marine boat on the water at Vesey Street. They wanted the line stretched -- I think two or three companies -- they were looking for engine chauffeurs. I'm an engine chauffeur. They were looking for engine companies to help stretch lines to manifold them to satellite off the boat close to the debris at the intersection of West and Vesey.

We rode with them. We took a rig. We drove down to the water and Vesey. There was already a rig backed in that dead-end street to the water, 3-something. Maybe 320-something. I don't remember. We had a spare rig that was like -- it was a spare rig or reserve rig. We stretched three and a half from there up Vesey to West, and we fed 33 Engine, I think. We supplied it to them. From them they fed it manifold, and they fed I think a satellite.

It was a mess. I remember thinking this is ridiculous. It's taking us forever just to stretch a line because everything was just chaos. There's lines all over the place. Nobody knew where this line ran, this and that.

Everything was all over the place.

There were a couple officers that did a good job keeping everybody together and saying hey, just do this, get this done. Everybody had their own ideas of what they should do, and everybody was doing what they thought they should do, and it was all different things. It was hard to accomplish simple tasks.

Once we did that, there was a long wait. We went in. We got that hooked up. We helped them. We were going to stretch some hand lines in, but they said to hang that. They kept backing everybody up and then bringing them in. Now at this point everybody was gathered on Vesey by West and wanting to go to work. Everybody was hanging out. This must have been probably almost an hour after the second tower came down.

We were over there. We tried to do what we could. Our officers tried to get us to work. We hung around for a while. I think they were more letting rescue do it and they were letting whoever had their rigs who was on the ends of any place supplying any kind of water. They were more interested in trying to supply

water, and there were some guys searching.

But they weren't letting guys too close. At this point Seven World Trade Center was going heavy, and they weren't letting anybody get too close. Everybody was expecting that to come down.

We hung out for hours. We went into the American Express building. We looked around there. We searched around for a while, but you could see guys were already in there. We pretty much did that on our own because we were right there and the door was there and we just walked in.

I remember later on in the day it was getting close that they were more concerned about seven coming down. We had no idea what was going on on the east side. We were all on our side. On the west side it was pretty clear. The wind was blowing from west to east, I believe.

I remember later on in the day as we were waiting for seven to come down, they kept backing us up Vesey, almost like a full block. They were concerned about seven coming down, and they kept changing us, establishing a collapse

zone and backing us up.

At one point I remember the chiefs gathered all the officers in the street. They put all the engines on one side of the street and the truck guys on the other side of the street, and they gathered all the officers in the center of the street to try to come up with some kind of plan, try and get some semblance of organization. They wanted everybody's riding lists. They wanted everybody to be accounted for to make sure that nobody was missing, just trying to get their bearings.

I remember being concerned about 47 Truck that went with us. They were relocated down to 6 Truck before we went down. So they were down there a lot earlier. Maybe their guys will tell you their story.

I remember trying to listen to the radio, hearing for anything on 47 Truck. I remember hearing the officers say something once, and I remember hearing 47 was on B call on 47's roof, but the roof not answering. We were concerned that some of them might be missing.

We had no idea what they were going

through on the other side or wherever they were, but we knew they were there because we heard on the radio. We were sure that they were there because they went back to 6 Truck, early.

After they got us in the street, I remember Chief Salka from the 180 was one of the guys that took charge. He kind of kept everybody in line. Him and I think Visconti had a plan of attack.

The whole time while we were waiting -- there were hours that went by. Seven came down after 5 in the afternoon. I remember listening to the rescues that were going on. They got 6 Truck out of the stairwell. I remember hearing all that, what was going on, Three or four different rope rescues going at the same time. Different chiefs talking to different crews, guys that were going in to try and get 6 Truck out.

Other than that, we were surprised that there wasn't a lot more going on on the radio. It was actually -- considering what was going on, it was pretty quiet. Plus it was like -- it must have been hours later when we realized both the towers were completely gone. It was just like

holy shit.

I remember somewhere during the hours of waiting there was a proby from 18 Truck that hooked up with us because he knew one of the probies that was with us. He didn't know whether he could find his company, so our officer told him just stay with us. So we latched onto another guy we had extra guys with us. I don't remember his name.

I know we were waiting in the street. You had the engines on one side, the trucks on the other, the officers were in the middle.

At that point I guess it was about 5 in the afternoon or so. That's when seven came down. Seven World Trade Center came down, and that was like two blocks away. As soon as it came down, everybody got up and tore ass west down Vesey Street.

Everybody was trying to get into this building. I remember there were 150 guys trying to get through two revolving doors with full gear. It was like (sound). Everyone is screaming. Guys were trying to smash the glass with their halogens to get through and ended up

freaking out. The stuff gave way and we all got out. You can laugh it off, like Jesus Christ. Everybody was shell-shocked.

That's when Salka came up and he said all right, now that seven was down you can start getting closer and down things. There was no collapse threat anymore. Salka wanted three engines and three trucks because he wanted to go into the Verizon building, which is on the corner of West and Vesey.

He wanted to search the Verizon building to make sure that there was no fire in there. He wasn't as concerned about people because he figured everybody was out by now because it was hours later. There wasn't much fire in there, but there was some. We didn't want to lose that building too. We're not going to stay away from it and let it burn because there wasn't much fire.

Everybody is jumping up. You had 300 guys that wanted to go to work, and he's looking for three engines and three trucks to go to work. Our boss got in there. He wanted companies that all had masks, companies that had radios, because

a lot of guys had radios because they came down alone.

It turned out because we scavenged we had our masks and we had radios that were working. We still scavenged in those hours for fresh batteries for the radios. I had that search rope. He needed a search rope. I gave Salka the search rope. He had gotten one.

So he ended up picking us to go. I'm trying to remember the truck company we went with. We went in with three chiefs. We paired up into teams, each one with a chief. I can't remember the truck company we went with. I want to say 13 Truck, but I don't think so.

Q. That's okay.

A. So we went in. What he wanted to do is we split up into three teams, and each team searched ten floors. We brought floor ropes with us in case we found fire. There was a rig right in front of the building. We each grabbed a length of hose and what we do to hook up, and we went in.

We had to force the door to the stairwell. We walked up -- I don't remember the

chief's name we went with. We went up to the tenth floor, and we searched from 10 to 20 looking for fire. We were looking for people too, but we were more concerned with fire. We had fire and there was damage, holes in the walls, big holes in the walls. Actually we were with 54 Truck. 54 Truck was there.

That was pretty much it. Then we came downstairs. By the time we came out, it was dark. We were shot. We were heading out. More people were showing up. There were hundreds and hundreds of guys there.

We came over to try and get another assignment at the command post. We saw 47 Truck there. And we picked up things that we were missing. We went to the command post. We saw Chief Didomenico to try and get another assignment. He took one look at us and said, "You guys been here since this morning?" We said, "Yeah." He said, "You better get the hell out of here." It was like 10:30 at night at this point. He told us to get out of there.

So we took our stuff and walked back down to the rig. We were trying to find our

chauffeur. Actually I remember as we were walking past 47 Truck's rig, there was a civilian going through it. He was wearing one of our guy's coats and one of our guy's helmets. I recognized the helmet. We grabbed the guy, "What the hell are you doing?" He said he was retired. He wasn't retired. We grabbed the stuff and told him to get the hell out of here.

We went back over and picked up our chauffeur and came back, back to quarters. We got back to quarters sometime shortly after 11.

That's it.

Q. That's pretty good. All right.

CHIEF KENAHAN: It's now 5:10 p.m.

This concludes this interview.

File No. 9110224

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FRANK CAMPAGNA

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today is December 4th, 2001. The time is 1431 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Fireman Frank Campagna of Ladder 11, and we're in the quarters of 28 Engine at this time. This is the fireman's statement.

Q. Where did you respond from?

A. I responded from quarters, came up the FDR, showed up to the scene. The fire was blazing out. The first plane had hit. We pulled up in front, and we headed inside toward the lobby. On the way inside you saw the usual stuff like everyone else saw, things falling and stuff like that.

We got inside the lobby and we waited to hear from a chief or whoever what's going to go on, wait until we found out what's going on. What wound up happening is they teamed us up with 4 Engine, I believe it was. What it was is they combined us as one hose team pretty much. So they dropped half of their rollups and we kept half of ours, we kept one standpipe kit, and we headed up together.

As we were going up, they said on the lower level the second plane hit the other building. Me personally, I felt it on another level up, so I think the timing was off between everybody.

We just kept walking up. As far as we knew, there were no planes or anything coming in. There wasn't even a plane that hit that building. We just knew there was a fire up there. Any other explosions that we felt from inside were maybe extra machinery or something like that. Those were the words that we were getting.

So we just kept going up the stairwell. We got up to about the 17th floor, and we felt another pretty big explosion. At this time about every two floors, every three floors you'd stop into an office, get some water, take a breather. Guys were pretty winded. They had equipment on and carrying everything.

We're taking a breather, and I believe that's when the other Trade Center went down and everybody felt it and they didn't know exactly what it was. Everyone headed towards the stairwell, thinking it was a safer place to be.

After that happened, the building was still standing, everybody kept going up. So we kept going up, still stopping about every two, three floors. People still coming down. We were just telling them to keep calm and walk on the way down.

We got up to about the 28th, 30th floor, and we were taking another break. There was an office or we had a whole floor full of people. A chief came down from a floor above with another company and said everybody evacuate, everybody out now. We had to switch staircases. I believe the staircase we were in, there was no way down it anymore on the lower level. There was word that it had been taken out; we don't know what from.

So we switched to a different staircase. We headed down. We let the civilians go first. We showed them towards that staircase and started heading down, letting the civilians go first, and we walked our way down. We were up there with a couple of companies. I don't know the exact numbers. I know 4 Engine was with us. Everybody went down with us.

We got down to the lobby, and there's a lot of guys down there in the lobby itself along with 4 Engine. Everyone is standing there, waiting to hear what's going to happen next, what's going on. Guys were just saying it's time to go, this isn't safe to stay in here.

So I believe we headed out along the wall of the Trade, and I believe 18 followed us out. That was it. It came down on top of us. That's all I remember of who followed us out or I heard who followed us out. 4 Engine obviously didn't make it out. They were with us the whole time, so I'm assuming they were still in the lobby at that time.

That's pretty much it from that point on.

Q. What did you see when you left tower one? Tower two had already collapsed.

A. I didn't see it. Tower two we didn't even know went down. I had no clue it went down. When we were up on the 30th floor, guys were banging out the windows, saying, "Holy shit, this looks like a war zone."

Guys were saying stay away from the

windows, something might come in, something might fall down and come in through the window. So I never got to see it. What they were talking about was the other Trade Center when it had gone down. The whole scene outside looked terrible.

On our way out when we left first World Trade, all we saw was -- it was like tunnel vision. All you saw was what was right in front of you. Things were still falling as we were heading out. The streets were all dusty. I was not really realizing that the other Trade Center had collapsed, because it was towards our left, I believe, which we were running towards the right. We were standing along the line, and it's just what's in front of me.

I wasn't really looking around to take a look. There's still stuff falling on top of us. So I still didn't know it went down. I actually didn't know until the other one fell down and I heard that the other one was gone while we were in there.

Q. Question: When you exited the World Trade Center, the north tower, you were going where? North on West Street? Which way were you

exiting the area? Running away from the buildings, which street were you on and which way were you going?

A. We were on West Side Highway and we were headed up towards --

Q. North?

A. Yeah, north, toward Vesey. We were right there. Our rig was parked on Vesey, so we headed up that way. We were right under the walkway just about, and that's when it started coming, about there.

Q. Did you see the command post? Did you see Chief Ganci? Do you know Chief Ganci?

A. No.

Q. Did you see the command post with the command board?

A. I saw the command post. Actually I don't know -- I just remember seeing like there was a bunch of people over there past the walkway towards the water. There was just a crowd of people. I didn't know -- in that intersection there, that's all I was looking at was in that intersection there.

There was nobody in the intersection,

nobody in the streets in general, everyone just saying come on, keeping coming, keep coming. That's when it went. I looked back. You see three explosions and then the whole thing coming down. I turned my head and everybody was scattering. From there I don't know who was who. I don't even know where my guys went. None of us knew where each other were at at that point in time.

Q. So you just kept running as it was collapsing?

A. Yeah, pretty much, yeah. Each and every person, pretty much.

Q. Then what happened? How did you regroup? Where did you go after that? Did you form up again or meet your guys again? What did you do after that?

A. After everything happened, we got engulfed by the whole cloud of smoke and everything, and guys were sharing masks inside that whole thing and trying to find our way out. We couldn't see anything inside there. I was right up on a cop van. My face was right against a headlight, and I could barely see that, because

the lights were on on it.

Once we got out of there, I heard Mike Kehoe yelling, "28, 28." I found him, and from there we went looking around and we found Roy. He was up getting IV up somewhere. Then we finally found our lieutenant and Jimmy Ippolito who both of them I guess had ran towards the water towards where all the guys were at the command post area. I guess they ran towards that way. We ran down the West Side Highway.

The other guy we didn't really know where he was was our chauffeur. He was still out by the truck, I guess, when everything was going on. I guess when the second plane hit, from what I understand, he got blown back a couple feet and he got helped out and he got taken to a hospital. So he's all right. That was the only one at that point that we didn't know.

Then we finally all regrouped and whatnot and found each other. Around that time guys were coming in bus loads before we know it, coming in to help search.

Q. Where did you park your rig? Where was 28 parked?

A. He dropped us off right in front, right in front of the tower we went in, which is --

Q. The north tower?

A. The north tower, the second one that went down. He dropped us off right in front of there, and from what I understand he parked it right on Vesey Street. That's where we got off. It was right in front.

Q. What floor did you reach when you were climbing up? You said you were like on the 20th floor and then you decided to come down?

A. 28th or 30th floor, the 30th, around there, because we were going like every two floors. So it was around there. I remember seeing 28 on the wall, and then I think we went up again. I think it was around the 30th floor, we made it up there. From there that's when we went down.

Then a chief came down and pretty much said everybody evacuate, because nothing was coming over the radios, as far as everybody was still waiting. We were waiting with a bunch of guys at that point in time.

I saw one of the guys I knew from the

academy. He was in 4 Engine. Another one I knew from academy, he was from 10-10. They were up there with us also. I don't know if you got details from someone else, but I'm pretty sure he was from there.

Q. What floor did you say you were on when you think the south tower fell down?

A. I would say about the 17th.

Q. You didn't have a radio that day. Did you have a handy talky?

A. Me? No.

Q. You were with the officer when you were climbing?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember what was on the handy talky when the south tower fell down? Was there a lot of screaming? Do you remember radio messages or anything like that?

A. No, nothing like that.

Q. There were a lot of guys in the lobby, you said, when you came down to the lobby and hooked up. You don't remember anybody specific, companies or personal people, individual people?

A. No, like I said, it was real tunnel

vision. I just wasn't being pretty much aware of anything around, who was around me and whatnot. Like I said, 4 and 18 are the only ones that stuck out in my head.

CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. I'm thanking the firefighter for the interview. The interview is concluded. It's now 1443 hours. This concludes the interview and also the chief's aide in the Safety Battalion, Michael Bosco, sat in on this interview.

File No. 9110225

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER BERTRAM SPRINGSTEAD

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today is December 4th, 2001. The time is now 1626 hours. I am Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with fireman first grade Bertram Springstead, Ladder Company 9. We're in the quarters of Ladder 9, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. Also present is fireman Michael Bosco of the Safety Battalion.

Now, Fireman Springstead, I have asked him to relate everything that he remembers from the incident on September 11th.

Q. Okay, go ahead.

A. September 11th I remember walking into the kitchen about 8:30 in the morning, sat down, coffee, paper. A little while later, I guess it was about a quarter to 9, somebody came in and said they saw the plane coming over quarters and then they said they saw it hit the Trade Center.

So we all ran to the corner of Lafayette and Great Jones, and we could see the big hole in the building where the plane had hit.

So we all went back to quarters, started getting dressed. We didn't get the call right away. 32 went on the first ticket. We were all sitting in the house watching, bunkering up. Then it came on the TV, and we started watching it on TV, wondering why we didn't get the call yet and complaining that we didn't get the call.

Q. Sure.

A. It was about 5 to 9, I guess, or a couple minutes before 9, I guess, I remember saying to the guys, "I wonder if they're holding this ticket until after 9." Sure enough, the ticket came in 090014.

Q. Get out of here.

A. And I made a copy of the ticket, and I stuffed it in my pocket, because I was like, "This is bullshit. I'm calling the union when I get back." We were watching people jump on TV from the building. I said how can they be holding this ticket. That was what was going through my mind the first time.

We get on the rig. We're going down. The probie, John Tierney, he was off duty before we got out. Something wasn't right that day. I

knew something was wrong, and I turned to him and said, "John, do me a favor, don't take this run in. Just stay here. You're off duty, you're not getting paid, just go home, man, just go home." But who is not going to jump on the rig? So he jumped on the rig and he was sitting on a lap.

We were driving down, sirens the whole way down. We get there. We stepped off the rig, and I look up and I noticed that both towers were on fire now. We didn't realize at the time that another plane had hit. We didn't see it and couldn't hear it while responding. I just figured the other tower was on fire from stuff flying from the other building. So we really didn't know there was a second plane.

We parked on I guess it was the northeast corner of the Trade Center, which is right at Vesey and Church, I guess. Vesey and Church, Vesey and Church right there. We stepped off the rig, and there were plane engine parts and people yelling and screaming. We stepped off and noticed the two towers on fire.

We started walking down Vesey towards West Street. Our assignment was tower one, so we

would go into the lobby. Just as we turned onto West Street, we were coming towards the entrance of the Trade Center and we saw a jumper coming down. We were like, "Oh, man, look at this." They were smoldering, on fire, smoking. So we were like, "Oh, man." Just a tremendous thump. The noise was unbelievable.

Now we're looking up as we're going in, and we go into the lobby and there's everybody. Von Essen's there. The Mayor's there. Everybody's at this command post, everyone in white hats. We were standing there at the command post, waiting for our assignment.

The probie still didn't have a mask. He had jumped on the rig, so he was on somebody's lap on the way down there. So I walked over to the command post and took one of the aide's mask and gave it to him and said, "Put this on because we were going up now." Ganci took us over to the stairs and said, "Call us when you get there." That's all they said.

Q. Ganci was with you in the lobby?

A. He showed us to the stairs. Ganci showed us to the stairs to take. We started

walking up. I was taking my time, pacing myself, going nice and slow, taking it easy. Those guys were a little quicker than I was, and they kind of advanced a couple floors beyond me.

They were up a couple floors ahead of me -- I don't know how many -- and Don Casey waited for me I guess it was on like the 13th floor -- I forget exactly what floor it was on -- so that I wouldn't be alone. I was taking my time going up there. We were taking breaks here and there. I forget what floors we took breaks on.

There were a lot of maydays with chest pains on the radios and stuff like that. I don't remember who or what floor, but there were a lot of maydays. EMS was going all over the place with maydays with chest pains.

We got up, and then me and Don were kind of pacing ourselves. We pretty much tried to take a break on every floor that you had access to, because you didn't have access on every floor. So whatever floor you had access, we would go in, take a quick breather and then get going again.

I guess it was about the 19th or 20th floor when I said, "Don I've got to take a break." I was really hot. I said, "Don, I've got to take this coat off for a second, take a breather." They had water, and people had broken open a Poland Spring machine and there were bottles of water, so we would take a break. I took my stuff off, and I was pouring water all over.

5 Engine was there on the floor too. Derek Brogan from 5 Engine, he was miserable, miserable: chest pains, nauseous, on his knees. He looked terrible. So we were pouring the water over him. Real bad.

Then Don Casey, who I was with, starts staying his arm was tingling, he's getting numbness in his arm, in his left arm. I was like, "All right, sit down." EMS was there. Two guys from EMS were there. One was working on Derek, and the other guy started working on Casey with the oxygen and stuff like that.

I remember somebody said, "You think you're having a bad day? Take a look out this window." We looked out the Trade Center window,

and there was the Vista Hotel, I guess it was there. I'm not really sure what building I was looking at, but I'm pretty sure it was the roof of the Vista. There had to be 30, 40 jumpers sprayed out all over the roof. I went, "Oh, Jesus, what the hell is going on here?"

As I was looking out the window, which is a total of five seconds, another jumper comes by, kind of like clipped the edge of the roof and just vaporized. The guy just disappeared. There was no longer a body, just a big cloud of red.

Q. Wow.

A. I was like, "I didn't need to see that." A total of five seconds I was looking out that window, total.

So I go back, and I was with Don and I was saying, "Maybe we should take you down, Don. Maybe we should start working down if you're getting --" He said, "No, I'm all right now. I'm all right."

The EMS guy was yelling at him. He said, "You guys, I've probably seen this a thousand times. You might be having a heart attack." But Don didn't think so. He thought

his suspender strap was too tight, which turned out it was, because he was fine.

There was a time we were like, "Well, I don't know, Case, maybe we should take you down. Let's get out of here. How much farther? Are you going to make it?"

Then 5 Engine was there, the whole 5 Engine was there. Derek Brogan was miserable. He was terrible. He looked terrible. I was nervous about him. He looked really bad. So I turned to 5 Engine officer. They didn't want to leave him, but they wanted to keep going. I said, "Look, Lou, you want me to take down Derek?" I said, "I'm going to take Don down. Do you want me to take Derek down? I'm taking two," because 5 Engine didn't want to leave another guy behind. He said, "Yeah, maybe that's a good idea, if you're going down." I had a radio, Don had a radio, and this way they didn't have to lose another guy with a radio when it went up.

So maybe, I don't know, five seconds later, that's when tower two must have started coming down. The building started shaking, a tremendous rumbling. Light bulbs were falling

out. File cabinets were tipping over.

We were in that corner of tower one that's kind of close to tower two where they kind of like point at each other there. That's the corner we were in. I don't know what the hell was going on, but whatever it was, it was right outside the window that we were standing like five feet from.

Some guys were diving on the floor. Some guys were -- I just took off for the other side. I said whatever was going on was on that side. I said I'm getting to the other side of the building. I started running.

We got to that side of the building. I didn't see Casey, but he told me he dove on the floor first. Then when he saw me run by, he said, "That looks like a good idea. Maybe I'll go with Bert and get to the other side." Casey got him to the stairwell. He said, "Let's get the hell out of here." I said, "Hold on, hold on, Case. I don't even know what that was. Let's regroup here. First we've got to go back and get our stuff."

We had taken our coats off. We don't

have any tools. We don't have our masks. I said, "Let's go back, get our stuff." I said, "First of all, Brogan is still back there. We're responsible for him now." I said, "Let's go see if we can find Derek."

We get back there. It was dark. Most of the light bulbs had fallen off, so you really couldn't see much. I guess it was from the dust cloud outside there was no light coming in. We didn't know at the time. We just thought it was another plane or something, another explosion or whatever. We really didn't know what it was.

We got our masks and our coats, grabbed the halogen and started looking for Derek, couldn't find him, searched all over. He didn't have a radio. We couldn't call him. Then we got the word on the radio to get out of the building. I was like, "Case, I guess he's gone. There's nobody on this floor." We searched the whole floor. There's nobody there.

So we started going down. We made our way to the stair. Then it was just a slow walk down, as slow a 20 floors as you can walk. You took a step, you took another step, took a step.

You got to each landing, you opened the door,
"Anybody else here? Let's go. Everybody out."
You let a couple people in front of you, another
step.

We just happened to be on the staircase
with an FBI guy. He had an FBI jacket on. He
turns around to me and goes, "We've got to get
out of here." I said, "What are you talking
about? We're getting out. Let's go.
Everybody's walking out." He said, "No, you
don't understand. There's more planes coming."
I said, "What the hell are you talking about,
more planes?" He said, "There's two more planes
on the way for these buildings." "What do you
mean, two more planes?" I didn't even know there
was more than one plane at this point. We didn't
know there was a second plane.

So then we started walking out. It
didn't matter. You weren't going anywhere. It
was slow walking. We got to about the 5th or 6th
floor. It was getting a little smoky, dusty,
whatever. Don started to put his mask on. I
said, "Don, why don't you save it?" It wasn't
that bad yet. I said, "Why don't we get down and

see if we need it to get out of here before we waste it up here." So we just started covering up, and we made it all the way down.

We came to the lobby, and the lobby was a disaster. It never registered that the other building had collapsed. We came outside, and we walked the same way we came in. We went back to the -- you didn't go through the doors. All the glass was broken on the ground floor when we came in the first time, I guess from the elevators collapsing or I don't know. All the glass was gone.

So we were walking through the plate glass along the wall. We slowly walked our way out towards the sidewalk, making sure that no jumpers were landing on us. I don't know what it was exactly, but I wound up seeing Lieutenant Smith. We just happened to bump into him.

I radioed to him on the way down that me and Case were in staircase B, I think it was, and we were on our way down. He said, "Okay. See you out front." I said, "Do we have everybody?" I forget what he said. I don't know. Everybody was with me on the stairs. I

don't see everybody.

But there were people -- there were guys all over the place. There were firemen everywhere, wandering around. So we started looking around to see if we could see the guys. I said, "Lou, they've got to be right here. So I'm going to go back inside and maybe they're in the lobby." He said all right, he's going to gather everybody up out here when I find our three guys. I said, "We'll get together up the street. We'll regroup and where are we going."

I still never realized the building had collapsed. In fact, I had my camera in my pocket, and I was taking pictures on the way out. Casey is yelling at me, "Let's get the hell out of here. What are you doing?"

Q. Did the pictures come out?

A. Yeah, they came out great.

Q. Have you got them here?

A. I have the negatives. Guys keep asking for copies left and right.

Q. I bet.

A. In fact, I get about six, seven copies made up at a time, and guys -- whatever it costs.

It costs me about \$5 to get them made.

So I started my way back in underneath that foot bridge right on the corner of Vesey and Church, the same way we walked in. There were a couple rigs there. There was a guy with a bullhorn, a chief. I thought he was a chief. He had a white shirt on. I don't remember if he had a helmet on. But he had a bullhorn, a guy with a bullhorn.

He was yelling, "Clear the area. Clear the area." I really wasn't listening to him. I was kind of walking by. He stopped me. He grabbed me. He said, "You've got to get out of here." I said, "Chief, I'm missing three guys." He said, "Everybody coming out I'm sending this way. They're probably out already. Go up this way. Everybody is going up this way." I said, "Look, Chief, they might be right here." He said, "Get the -- out of here now." He had me by my shoulder and he kind of shoed me away.

All right. So now I'm doing the same thing. I'm looking around. There's firemen all over the place now. I'm looking at each guy and I'm going over to guys. It's not really

registering. The street is a disaster. There's stuff all over the street.

I was just by the other side of that foot bridge, I guess. You heard somebody, turned around and looked up, and I saw a big section of the facade coming down, straight down. I said, "Holy shit," and I took off up West Street, north on West Street, just ran as far as I could, which wasn't too far before the dust cloud took you out and stuff was hitting you and banging off your mask and your helmet and, geez, what the fuck's going on, you know?

Then the dust cloud started coming, and I turned around and the cloud was coming and I turned my mask on and put it on. Then it was just dust and dark for it seemed like forever, darker than any fire I had ever been in. There was nowhere to go. You could see it swirling around you. I actually had to push the face piece onto my face to keep it out. It was forcing its way inside.

Then it was just wandering in the dark north on West Street, bumping into cars and barricades and whatever else I bumped into. I

finally started coming out of the dust and finally started seeing a little light. I turned around, and now I'm missing all seven guys, the other seven guys that were with me. Now I don't know where anybody is.

So I started looking for guys again. The first guy I saw was the chauffeur, Warnock. He was miserable. He didn't have a mask on, so he must have dropped it and ran. I don't know what happened. He didn't have his mask on, so he was terrible. He couldn't see. He had stuff in his eyes. He could barely breathe.

I just scooped him up by his arm and dragged him over to an ambulance and was banging on the back. They opened up. I actually had to scoop stuff out of his mouth, it was so thick with dust and stuff. I told him, "Mike, make yourself throw up. Get rid of that stuff."

EMS was trying to hose him down and get the stuff out of his eyes. I was holding him down as they were squirting the stuff into his eyes to clean his eyes. They were clearing his eyes. It wasn't like dust; it was like rocks were in his eyes. It was bad. He was in a bad

way. They laid him down. EMS was there, so I said, "Mike, I'll be back." I said, "Let me go see if I can find anybody else."

The next guy that I saw was I think it was Smith and Casey. Casey was hurting too. He had his mask on the way out, but he said he lost it to run. He said he figured you moved faster. So he was hurting too. I dragged him over to where Mike was. Lieutenant Smith seemed okay. He is a pretty fast runner. I don't even know if he got caught in the dust, because he's a jackrabbit.

That was it. I didn't see Mike. Then the other three guys -- Mike Maguire, I didn't know where he was. Casey and Warnock were in the ambulance. I kind of asked them not to go. I said, "Why don't we stay together, guys. It's chaos. Why don't we stay together. I don't even know where they're taking us. Why don't we just stay together."

They weren't that bad; they were just -- they were okay now they got their eyes washed out. They didn't seem that bad. I said, "Why don't we stay together. One of the guys

said, "No, I just want to get away from this."

They were like, "Okay, go ahead."

So that was me, Smith and I don't remember -- there was some probie there in an orange hat, and he couldn't find his company, he didn't know where everybody was, he didn't have a radio. I said, "Why don't you stay with us and listen to the radio." I don't even remember his name or his company. He stayed with us the rest of the day. He never hooked up with any of the guys in his company. I don't even remember what company he was. He stayed with us.

We walked around, and I started calling the guys on the radio, you know, "9 OV to anybody at 9 Truck." It was weird because there was no radio traffic. There was nobody on the radio. It's like I could clear as day call anybody that was on it. Nobody was answering.

Then I started with 33 Engine. Nobody was answering. I just kept wandering around. Finally Mike Maguire, who had the can, he answered me. He told me where he was. I forget what street. West Street and North End walk, something like that. So we had to walk a couple

blocks to get to there.

We never found him. I didn't see him again until nighttime. I don't know, it was like 10:00 at night the next time I finally saw Mike. But I knew he was okay, though, so I really wasn't worried. I was more worried about the other three guys.

I kept wandering around. Finally somebody said, "Well, everybody who's been coming out, they've been sending them to a staging area north on West Street. I said, "All right, let's go up there. Maybe they're up there." He said they were sending everybody north on West Street.

So we kept walking north. We never saw anything. We hitched a ride to 8 Truck, and then they said they would taking guys to 20 Truck, anybody they found were going to 20 Truck. I said, "All right, let's go to 20 Truck, see if the guys are there."

We still assumed that those three guys had gotten out. We had gotten out, so we were like where the hell are they? They must have gotten out. We went to 20, and they weren't there. Then I told Lieutenant Smith, "Lou, I'm

going to walk back to quarters. Maybe they'll try and call quarters."

I got back to quarters, and they weren't there. This was like 4 or 5:00 in the afternoon now, after we had been wandering down there for hours. Nothing. They never --

Q. Where did you last see those guys?

A. I saw them in the lobby going up in the stairs, probably the third floor going up. They were taking off. They were in much better shape than I was. They were flying up the stairs. I'm like I'm pacing myself. We've got 90 floors. I said I'm not going -- I'd be dead by the 20th floor if I ran up 20 floors. It was a nice easy pace.

I never saw those guys for the rest of the day. I was with Casey. I bumped into Smith and Warnock. When I saw those guys outside, it was right underneath that foot bridge. That's where I saw those guys. Then I turned around and went back in the lobby.

I saw Mike Maguire. I kind of just waved to him that, hey, be careful of the jumpers.

We were out there. He walked out and met up with those guys. Then everybody scattered when it came down. Guys went off in all different directions. Those guys were walking north on West Street when I went back towards the building to go back in to get the other three guys.

That's the last time -- I never saw Walz. I never saw Baptiste. I never saw Tierney. I never saw those guys. I figured they had to be in that lobby, though. I don't know, they must have made a wrong turn in the lobby or something or followed the wrong guy. I don't know. I didn't really see them, so I don't know what they did. I just figured they were in that lobby and I was going to go get them.

That was it. I got back to quarters. Answering the phone putting the family off then. That was pretty much it.

Q. Those three guys are lost?

A. Those three guys are lost.

Q. They never came back?

A. No. I thought for most of the night that we'd find them someplace, whether it was in

a hospital. They didn't know where anybody was. I just assumed they got out. I just assumed that those three guys got out. I miss them.

Q. Sure.

A. That's basically it.

Q. I just want to ask you a couple questions that I jotted down while you were talking.

What position did you have? Do you remember?

A. OV.

Q. You were the OV. Okay.

Did you get any sense that the elevators were running at any time when you got there or at any time was there any talk about --

A. The elevator doors were blown off.

Q. Blown off?

A. Yeah. You could see they were a disaster.

Q. Was there evidence of fire or smoke in that area? Did you get the sense that fire had been in that shaft or was in that shaft, the elevator shaft?

A. No, no, I never thought -- I just

assumed that they must have plummeted from being cut --

Q. I see.

A. The airplane just -- that's probably why the plate glass was blown off too. We didn't walk through the doors; we walked through -- all the glass in the lobby was out.

Q. Even when you got there?

A. Yeah. So we walked through the glass to get into the building.

Q. Wow. Oh, yeah, I could see that, the elevators coming down might do that.

How about the handy talky traffic? You were on Channel 1 the whole time?

A. Yes.

Q. You didn't switch over; right?

A. No. There was chaos, and then they said -- I remember somebody saying tower two switch to whatever number it was. I don't know what they switched to. But I was in tower one.

Q. Handy talky Channel 1 that you were on, was it chaos the whole time? There was a time that you were making some calls to people?

A. There were so many maydays going on.

Q. You did hear maydays, but what about getting through?

A. Maydays were left and right for guys with chest pains. There was a lot of guys with chest pains. After tower two collapsed, we didn't know it at the time but there was one radio transmission that came through that said the 65th floor just collapsed. But we didn't know what that was or who gave it. I heard on the radio 65th floor just collapsed. I don't know who gave it or for what building. It had to be our building, because we were on a different radio channel. That was it.

Q. At any time did you hear any announcements over like the PA system instructing people what to do, like the fire wardens making any announcement?

A. No.

Q. Did you get any sense? Do you have any recollection?

A. No, I don't remember hearing any.

Q. No.

A. Everybody was calm walking down. There was no problems. We were on the right. We were

going up on the right; they were going down on the right, patting us on the back, handing us water, "go get them, guys, you're earning your money today," all sorts of stuff like that.

Q. When you came downstairs, you used the words "the lobby was a disaster." What did the lobby look like?

A. Just like dusty and --

Q. Dusty --

A. The lobby was empty. I was going back towards the command post. I figured that's where everybody was going to be. The command post was set up in like that northwest corner of the building there. There was no chiefs in the lobby. There was nothing there. I'm like now where do we go.

So we just started filtering out towards the street, because that's where everybody -- there was kind of like a line on the stairs. Thank God we went the right way. If you went left, I don't think you were getting out of there. If you made the right, that's the way we went into the stairs, so that's the way I went out. That was the way I was walking back to the

rig, the same way I went in there. It was just a right lucky pick of the two.

Q. That's pretty much it?

A. Yeah.

MR. MALKIN: I want to thank you for your statement and cooperating. The time is now 1655 hours, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110226

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD SHEEHEY

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is December 4th, 2001. The time is 3:23 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Kenahan from Safety Battalion from the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Edward Sheehey, fireman first grade of Engine 91. There is no one else present.

Q. Okay. Start your --

A. We responded after the second tower was hit by the aircraft, through voice alarm. I guess it took us approximately, on the fifth alarm, between five and ten minutes to get down there.

We got off the rig on West Street and Vesey, parked the rig. We noticed numerous jumpers coming down. There were firemen across the street that called us over to the command post. We went to the command post. We were standing fast at the command post with other companies, waiting for an assignment.

We were there approximately maybe ten minutes before we received an assignment to go into the south tower subbasement. We were on our way in with an engineer, and he told us that if

there was smoke in the building that he wasn't able to go. He had no mask, and he didn't have all the keys to the doors.

So a battalion chief, which I do not know who he is, stopped us and told us he was going to get us more men, and we sent the chauffeur back to the rig for tools, forcible entry tools. Within one or two minutes standing there waiting for him to come back, the south tower started to collapse, and we --

Q. Where exactly were you when the south tower collapsed?

A. We were proceeding across West Street. We were probably maybe 25 yards from the command post.

Q. South of the command post?

A. Straight across from it, going in towards the south tower. We were probably just at West Street, just at the street. Then the south tower -- we heard an explosion, looked up, and the building started to collapse.

We dropped all our tools and gear, and we turned around. There was a parking garage to the right of the command post, so we ran down

into the parking garage. After being in the garage about five minutes, we got out through a stairwell in the rear out into a rear courtyard.

At that time we started looking for rest of the members of the company. We found one other member, Joe Meola. We then proceeded to look for the lieutenant and the two other members. I guess we made our way around back to the front after about five or ten minutes looking for them. It seemed like five or ten minutes. We found Tim Hoppey.

That's when the north tower started to collapse. At that time we ran down Vesey Street towards the water and then north through a construction site and basically started looking for the rest of the guys that we were with.

About an hour and a half later we found our lieutenant, Lieutenant Casey. We just stood fast with him for the rest of the day. About an hour after that we found our chauffeur. We found out he was in the hospital.

Q. Did you hear any emergency transmissions on the handy talky? Did you have a handy talky?

A. No, I didn't have a handy talky.

Q. Did you hear anything being next to anybody?

A. I heard maydays. As we were at the command post, we heard maydays. I couldn't make out what they were for.

Q. Was this before the collapse or after?

A. Before the collapse. Then after the collapse I heard -- we looked for someone with a radio, and we found a captain from another engine company. I couldn't tell you what company he was from. He was looking for the rest of his men, and he had a handy talky. He said if he heard them calling for us he would let us know. I heard a couple of maydays on his handy talky but couldn't make out who was giving them or where they were.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. No, nothing I can remember. That's what we did pretty much. That was basically our whole involvement in the collapse.

Q. Okay. Thanks for your help.

MR. KENAHAN: The time now is 3:28, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110227

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEITH FACCILONGA

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: 5:38 and this is
Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety
Battalion of the New York City Fire
Department. I'm conducting an interview
with Keith Faccilonga, firefighter first
grade from Engine 64.

Q. Go ahead and tell us what you remember
from September 11th.

A. I saw the second plane hit the second
tower on TV. I tried calling my battalion -- I
tried calling my company -- (inaudible) after the
second plane hit the towers, I got in my car. I
called the company and then I called my battalion
and I called my division, and there was no
answers.

I had my firefighting gear at home with
me and started getting the gear together,
figuring I was going to come into work. After
getting all the gear together, I made the phone
calls again. Still no answer at all three
places, including 47 Truck, who has their own
department phone.

I got in the car and drove down.
in live nx. I figured I was close enough

to get down there, report in to a chief and do something. I drove down on the FDR Drive. I was about halfway down -- I couldn't tell you where, probably in the mid 90s when I saw the first tower go down. I saw that from the FDR Drive.

I had my helmet in the window, and the police kept waving me through. I got down there pretty quick; I would say less than 15 minutes door to door. I parked my car. I pulled -- actually on the FDR Drive right around the Brooklyn Bridge, there was, I would say, thousands and thousands of civilians that were walking up in a panic, up the FDR Drive.

The smoke at that point was so thick that I couldn't even see, so I had to back up, make a U turn on the FDR Drive and get off, I guess underneath the Brooklyn Bridge. Somehow I made my way over to Park Row, took one look, parked on Fulton Street right next to the St. Paul cemetery.

I got out of my car. I got my firefighting gear on, my bunker gear, helmet and everything, no mask. I walked about half a block down Church Street and made a left. In front of

me was Five World Trade Center with fire showing out of just about every single window of Five World Trade. The building was fully involved, the whole entire building.

I made a left on Church Street, and I continued walking and that's where parts of the first building were all over Church Street and all in between Four World Trade and Five World Trade it was all parts of, I guess Two World Trade Center was the first one to collapse.

I made my way to the corner of Liberty and Trinity, and I found a bunch of firemen that had come in the same as I did, on their own, on their day off and were in the same situation. We were going through rigs looking for Scott masks. That was the only thing nobody had and the one thing that everybody needed.

220 Engine was parked, it looked like I think on the corner of Trinity and Liberty, and the truck was there and he was telling me he lost his whole company in the first collapse. So a bunch of us got together with a lieutenant from -- I don't even know what company. I don't remember his name anymore. We told him you're in

charge and he was going to lead us in and try to find the guys that the truck from 220 was telling us were missing.

We headed down Liberty Street towards the quarters of 10 and 10, and we made it just about that far. I would say somewhere across from 10 and 10 right in the plaza. We were making our way across the rubble, and it was real slow going.

We were crawling across the rubble, trying to find -- at this point I wasn't sure which building had collapsed. I know the area a little bit. We were trying to get towards Two World Trade Center, which was the building that went down already. We didn't know that. So we're trying to get in there, thinking that's where the guys are. We're thinking -- I'm not sure -- we figured we could find the guys.

So we're walking over there, we heard a big roar. Nobody really knew what the roar was until the chauffeur from 220 said, "Oh, my God, not again." We turned around and started running directly up Liberty Street away from the Trade Center, running east on Liberty. We crossed

Trinity. On the way a couple of guys bailed out and went into some of the buildings. Some guys hid in Burger King. Myself, I kept running. I tripped a couple of times. I got pelted and half buried along the way.

I got over to the corner of Broadway and Liberty, and there was a truck company parked on that corner. We hid behind the truck, and all the stuff came flying by. A couple of guys got hit by stuff and hurt by stuff. Even guys that were hiding behind the rig were getting hurt. I noticed some windows were broken.

At that point I couldn't breathe anymore. But there was an officer. I think he was from...I would have to say 20 Truck who shared a mask with me. I never found out really who it was, but I think it was a lieutenant from 20. He shared a mask with me.

After a good couple of minutes of pitch-black total darkness, it started to clear up a little bit and I could almost breathe again and maybe you could see your hand in front of your face. I decided to then go back, because on my way running away from the building I knew I

left guys behind that I really wasn't sure if they made it or not.

I made it back down there toward 10-10 where I lost guys. The rubble was so deep that there was no way we were going to dig something up. I mean, everybody knows it was real deep rubble, and we heard banging on the doors of Burger King. So we went over to Burger King. There were a couple guys in there. They thought they were buried alive because the dust and dirt were so thick on the windows. They couldn't see anything. So we pulled the doors open, and there were maybe, I would say around five, six, seven guys, maybe, came out of there, and they were surprised they weren't buried in a couple of feet worth of dirt. It was only thick on the windows. It made them think they were buried alive in there.

We all got together again and tried to make another trip to get in there. As we entered the plaza again the second time. Now, stuff that had fallen I guess whatever was...there big, hard pieces of, I don't know, big pieces that had been standing for weeks. Pieces were falling off

there and landing and we were kind of worried about some landing on us.

We couldn't pass there on Liberty, so we made our way south. I'm not sure if we went up Albany or Carlisle. I'm not sure what street it was. We went around to the west side, and along the way different guys were trying to do different things.

We hooked up with a couple of different chiefs, a couple of different lieutenants and captains, and different guys would attach themselves to those bosses and try to do something with them. Because the wind was blowing from the west, I thought the best bet was to go to the West Side Highway and try to make an attack from that side.

So me and a couple of guys from -- I don't remember what squad, but one of the squads, we hooked up together and we found an officer. We made our way to the West Side Highway, and we tried to make a push into the rubble. Actually while we were doing it, there were some fires that they were putting out. I took some hose line straps. We helped stretch some hose lines,

helped carry some pieces to the manifolds, some gates, stuff like that. We were carrying stuff along the way.

What else? At that point there were civilians up in one of the buildings. I couldn't tell you which building it was at the time. He was up in one of the buildings that was damaged but not knocked down. He was waving to us. We kept saying, "What the hell does that guy want?" It looked like he wanted to be saved originally, but then we realized he was pointing and he saw something that we couldn't see.

So we started walking. He was directing us towards the south pedestrian bridge. As we got closer to the pedestrian bridge, I saw something shiny so I called some guys over, and we started making our way towards where the pedestrian bridge came to the ground on the east side of the West Side Highway.

Right where the pedestrian bridge met the ground, I noticed a bunker coat. So I called everybody over, and we started digging frantic. Then we realized we found somebody for sure. We started finding that it was his whole entire

bunker coat and his hand was still in the bunker coat.

We were digging, and there was no response from whoever was buried. We got him buried out as much as we could, but there were three motorcycles that were pinned on him. It looked like a river of debris had come in. He had hid under the pedestrian bridge at the point by the ground where it meets the ground. He hid there I guess when the building collapsed. I'm not sure which one. At this point we didn't know who it was. Now I do know it was a chauffeur from 65 Engine, and we didn't know until we got him out of there, and I'll continue telling you how we got him out.

So he hid under the bridge where the forty-five meets the ground, and he got dirt from both sides of the bridge. Stuff just came running like a river and just buried him. There were three motorcycles that had toppled over, and they were pretty much pinning him to the ground even after we dug him out.

So myself and one other guy got as close as we could to the chauffeur. We grabbed a

hold of the motorcycles. He finally came to and he finally was talking to us. He told us he was the chauffeur from 65. He didn't know how long he was out. He was unconscious. He doesn't remember anything other than running and hiding under there and then waking up. I think he was out for at least an hour or two by the time we made our way to him. It might have been more. I'm not sure.

I was the closest one to him and I told him we were going to try to get him out of there. We picked up the motorcycles as much as we could, but it still wasn't enough. We got some more guys over.

There was some fire in the rubble pile that was getting pretty intense, and the heat was a lot for us. So they stretched more line to put out the fire while we tried to get him out. We got a back board in there, and somebody counted to three. On the count of three, about three or four of us picked up the motorcycle as high as we could. While another two, three guys pulled him out of the pile. He was still pinned. I think his leg was pinned in the pile.

So then I crawled underneath and tried to find out where he was pinned, his leg was stuck at. Probably his bunker gear was stuck under the motorcycles. So then we kind of finagled his legs. He was really tough. It was pinned pretty bad. The only thing we could think of was to pull him out. We got him free of what he was pinned under. We got a whole bunch more guys, maybe about five or six guys, to try and pick the motorcycles up on the count of three. I counted to three this time, and I told the chauffeur that we were going to pull him out on three. He was counting down and he was still pinned. I couldn't see where he was pinned. So we said we were going to do it and if it was too much, he was supposed to scream and let us know. On the count of three we picked up the bikes, and the guys pulled him out. They threw him on the board, and they got him out.

Let's see. After that I took a break for a couple of minutes. I got some water. I went and scavenged some equipment off of some rigs. I got a halogen, and I found a Scott pack off one of the rescue rigs that was parked right

there, very close to the pedestrian bridge where Liberty meets the West Side Highway.

I got one of the Scott packs, and I put that on. Pretty much for the next couple hours we were inside the rubble pile, mostly from the west side. Since, like I said before, the wind was blowing towards the east, and it was a lot clearer coming in from the West Side Highway going toward Battery Park.

I concentrated my efforts towards One World Trade Center and Two World Trade Center. On and off during the day I hooked up with numerous firefighters and officers from lieutenants all the way up to battalion chiefs. We would hook up with teams and work as much as we could until somebody needed a blow and then they'd go take their own break and come back whenever they were ready and then hook up with another group or the same group. It pretty much went on like that until around 5:00. Let's see, it was around 3:00 I decided to take a break, and I made my way back towards -- I headed towards the command post set up on Broadway somewhere near Park Row. So I was pretty much spent at

that point.

So I made my way over to Park Row where there was a command center where there were companies coming in. It was City Hall Park where I guess it was kind of a meeting point where people were coming in. I saw people coming in from "the Rock" I guess they sent their chauffeur school, that type of thing. They were all showing up there.

Checking in and I saw 47 Truck there, which is the truck that's in with the engine I'm assigned to. So I went over there and I reported to that officer who was Lieutenant Lowney. So I reported to him. I told him that I was going to be attached to him for the day. He's just about to sign in, I guess, and he was going to give my name. So I figured I would stay with them for the rest of the day. That was somewhere between 2 or 3:00.

At that point some fireman and some police were scavenging stuff from a hardware store, from a pharmacy for drops. My eyes were shot. I couldn't see anymore. We were putting drops in our eyes. We got some tools.

We finally got an assignment. We got on the rig maybe around 3:00 and drove around to see what was going on over by Six World Trade and make our way towards the rubble from that end. We were doing that for about two hours. Pretty much we couldn't get past the rig. So we carried as much food as we could. We made our way to the pile again. We were doing searches. Not much found. It was rough going.

At that point I was having trouble breathing. I couldn't even walk 20 or 30 yards without help. So they put me in an ambulance, gave me oxygen and they were talking about intubating me and they sent me off to St. Claire's Hospital. I stayed there pretty much through the night.

I got out of the hospital. That night I stayed at a friend's house in Manhattan. I came back down around 9:00 in the morning to get my car. My car was on Fulton Street. I got my car and went back up to the Bronx. I was supposed to be working that day and pretty much the rest was all responding with 64 Engine after that. You know after the first day.

So I guess pretty much that's my story.
That's about it.

Q. Okay. Thanks a lot.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 6:05
p.m. This concludes this interview.

File No. 9110228

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DAVID MORIARTY

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is December 4th, 2001. The time is 5:17 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with David Moriarty, firefighter first grade from Engine 64.

Q. Please tell us the events of September 11th as you remember them.

A. On the morning of September 11th, I was working a mutual with Kevin Hansen. I was working a day tour here at 64 Engine. I was just finishing up getting shaved when we received from the news that a plane had struck the World Trade Center. I was looking at the television when we actually saw the second plane strike the World Trade Center while we were still in quarters.

Sometime after that we received a ticket to respond as an additional unit on a fifth alarm to the quarters of 35 Engine in Harlem, and we got on the rig and headed down to Harlem. While we were on the Bruckner Expressway heading down, you could see smoke rising from the area of southern Manhattan in the vicinity of the

World Trade Center.

We got down to Harlem, and Lieutenant Brendan Whelan was working in 35 that day. He got promoted out of Ladder 47 here. They were in the process of gathering extra tools and stuff for their apparatus, and he had us stage our apparatus around the corner facing I guess east.

We were there for a short period of time, and other companies came in. I believe 94 Engine responded in, maybe 50 Engine was there and a couple of additional engines. I don't remember exactly who.

We were in quarters, like I said, not that long and the voice alarm went off, and the person on the voice alarm asked Brendan to read out a roll call of all of the units which were currently at quarters there. Brendan did that, and he had to repeat it a couple of times. You could tell the guy on the voice alarm was probably writing it down.

Shortly after Brendan read it out to him, he said -- the guy on the voice alarm, the dispatcher, said respond forthwith to West and Vesey Street to the staging area.

So we got on the apparatus, and somehow we wound up pretty much like in the lead heading south through Manhattan. In the area of 81st and Central Park West -- I don't know if it was the traffic conditions or what, but we were kind of delayed right there.

I told the chauffeur that I knew of an entrance to the West Side Highway at 79th. So what we had to do was we went one block west to Columbus, went south to 79th, made a right all the way across and got on the drive there at 79th and West Side Highway and proceeded south.

It was while we were in transit there that the radio traffic picked up on the citywide, and somebody put over that there was a collapse at the World Trade Center. The thing was, they never went into the extent of the collapse. We didn't realize that the entire south tower had collapsed while we were en route.

That transmission was somewhat garbled, and immediately after that we heard a member over the citywide frequency screaming a mayday. You could tell by his voice that he was pretty bad. He was in bad shape. He said he was trapped by

debris, he was finding it difficult to breathe and "Somebody come and get me." The dispatcher got right back on and tried to calm him down and assure him that they had units moving towards his location.

Then pretty soon after that we arrived on West Street north of West and Vesey, several blocks north of the walk bridge that's at a college there or something. That's where our chauffeur found parking.

We got off the rig and we grabbed our rollups. We started walking south on West. Vinnie Massa, who had the control position, told us hold on a second. He wanted to just remove the basic items he'd need for a standpipe operation from the standpipe kit so he wouldn't be lugging the entire kit with him.

At this time there was units all over the place on West, guys walking south and throngs of civilians walking north. I mean, hundreds and hundreds of people were walking north on West.

Then we started sizing it up as we were walking. It was pretty bad. I mean, the north tower was burning pretty good. It was ripping on

the upper floors. There was all sorts of debris in the air. We could see there was a dust in the air that we didn't really understand what it was. We thought it was smoke and whatnot. People were still streaming north as we were headed south.

I started watching the debris, trying to see the other tower. The debris that was in the air and stuff, I was watching that, trying to see around the north tower to see the south tower, how bad did it look.

As I was looking through the debris was when I first started seeing people jumping out of the north tower. I had thought at first -- I was walking alongside my probie, Billy Horel, and we were both kind of looking up at the debris. It was like, "Did you see that?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Those are people jumping out of the building." There were enough of them that jumped while we were walking.

As we got closer, you could see debris, but there was a throng of firefighters and people still between us and Vesey. That's when I started noticing equipment on the roadway and masks and shit like that.

I had been looking up again, and suddenly somebody to the front of us -- I don't know if it was a civilian or firefighter or cop or what -- said, "She's coming down." We were within a half a block of the north tower.

It was my intention -- I was probably the senior guy on the back step that day -- that we report in to some command center down there. Our officer would report in and we would probably be going into the north tower or somewhere with an assignment for a high rise job.

But that shout went up, and the crowd in front of us suddenly surged towards us. Everybody turned and started coming back north. I looked up, and it appeared as if the north tower -- it almost appeared to be liquefied. The very top of it began to cascade out and down, almost in a rolling motion.

As I watched it, the street started to fill with this tremendous sound of just noise. It reminded me of a jet aircraft engine when a jet takes off. It was that loud. The debris started coming out onto West and down.

We turned. I yelled something, maybe

"Come on 64," or something. I grabbed my probie by his harness, and I took one last look. I could see now that the dust cloud was coming up at us pretty fast. We turned around and we started heading back north. We weren't running at a flat-out run, but we were walking very briskly.

I took a look over my shoulder. I realized we weren't going to outrun this thing. Still holding onto Billy, I said, "Come here." There was an EMS ambulance parked facing north in the southbound lanes. I said, "We've got to get down here." I got down in front of the bumper with Billy. I told him, "Mask up, mask up."

I looked, and I didn't know what was in this debris. I said to myself if there's any heavy stuff in this debris, we might not be in the best of spots, but at least we had some cover. Before I could get my mouthpiece, my face mask on, it was that quick. That cloud of stuff was up, on us, and over us.

I didn't know exactly where the other members of the company were, but I knew Billy was with me. He got his mask on. I cleaned mine out

a little bit. It was very difficult to breathe. Everything became kind of encapsulated. You couldn't hear people yelling. Things weren't as loud as they would normally be on the street because of this dust that was all around us.

What happened then was the EMS ambulance was running. It was on. The engine was on. It started whining terribly bad. I realized it was sucking all the dust. I thought maybe we're going to have a car fire here. I told Billy, "Billy, we're going to stand up and walk north together out of this thing." Basically that's what we did.

There were other people. We did bump into people that were standing. We didn't encounter anybody laid out or anything like that along our path north until we got out of that cloud.

When we got out of that cloud, we regrouped. It was a matter of minutes before all of the members were accounted for, we had everybody, and we turned around and headed back south now.

It was at that point as we closed in on

where the north tower had been that I really realized the extent of what had happened. There was a tremendous amount of equipment strewn across West Street, I mean partner saws and masks. I saw a case for a heat-seeking camera. I was clued in on that.

We passed a side street, and there was an engine. I think it was 16; I'm not sure. It was hooked up to a hydrant. There was debris burning around it, and it was a matter of I did a quick check, a cursory check, for the chauffeur to see if he could possibly be in among this stuff here.

It was on a side street away from like the heavy debris. There was all this stuff, and there were small pockets of fire burning around the apparatus. It was like is he around? We looked under the rig. We checked the interior of the rig. There was nobody by that rig, so we moved on. We moved south back towards the Trade Center.

We got to the corner of West and Vesey, and it was just very chaotic at that point. There was a lot of firemen there, guys looking

for stuff to do, doing cursory examinations of the pile and stuff.

Shortly -- I don't know how long. You know, time kind of speeded up and slowed down depending on where you were. What we wound up doing is we assisted members of 54 Engine. They had been ordered to draft water from a marine unit in the river.

We assisted them in positioning the rig. We got a manifold, and we had I think four or six lines. Like they were eventually hooked up to this manifold in the area of West and Vesey. Those lines were operating. We didn't operate off of it, but other companies had them charged.

There were guys that had put up portable ladders towards part of the World Trade Center there and were getting up onto I guess it was a mezzanine level and doing a search there real quick.

But the command at that point wasn't really organized at first. Then I remember seeing like a few different chiefs at the corner throughout the day. They became very concerned

about the condition of number Seven World Trade and where we were in vicinity to that. They kept announcing the collapse and who's moving, and we got pushed further and further west.

We took a blow in the vicinity of the American Express building. I heard that a police officer, the body of a police officer, had been recovered right where we were standing when we first got there to the corner. Guys were just making small examinations of the pile that was around us. But they weren't really getting guys get too deep into it because of the possible pending collapse of Seven World Trade.

We were staged there a good part of the afternoon until seven finally did collapse. It was shortly after the collapse of seven that -- Chief Fellini, I guess was the commander at West and Vesey. I know Chief Salka was at West and Vesey and there was another chief with them.

They wanted to get a primary of the Verizon building. They were asking for three engines and three trucks. That's all they wanted to commit to the buildings to do a cursory examination for possible victims and stability

and building damage. 64 Engine was chosen to do part of that search.

We wound up entering the building. Three engines, three trucks teamed up, one engine, one truck, per ten floors. It was 6 or 9 Truck that we wound up with, and we did floors 10 through 20. We did have structural damage to the building, especially to the east side, and small pockets of fire set back there, but no victims within the building.

We came out, and we took a blow on West Street, reported back to the command center. Basically we were told that it was time for us to leave. We wanted to stay. The chief that was on duty then, he asked us what tour we were working and so on. We told him we were there from the day tour. The chief said, "I've got a thousand guys here to help. It's time for you to guys to take up and go home," which we eventually did. That's it.

Q. Very good. Thanks for your help.

A. Okay.

CHIEF KENAHAN: This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110229

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TIMOTHY HOPPEY

Interview Date: December 4, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: It's December 4th, 2001. The time is 3:39 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Timothy Hoppey, firefighter first grade, assigned to Engine 91. We're at the quarters of Engine 91 conducting this interview.

Q. Go ahead with any --

A. We cut through Central Park to get down there. Then we got over to the West Side Highway. The cops pretty much had it all cleared out for us, so we cruised right down to pretty near the World Trade Center. I believe we parked on West Street.

We got off the rig. It was myself, Ed Sheehy and Maureen Schulman on the back step. We took our rollups and started walking down West Street toward the command center that we were to report to, walked about 50 yards or so, and Maureen was actually carrying the standpipe kit and rollups. I went back and grabbed the standpipe kit from her to speed things up a bit.

We got down to the command post. As soon as we arrived at the command post, I noticed the jumpers were coming down there. I believe there were a lot more landing on top of the hotel, but some were hitting out in the street.

There were quite a few firefighters already assembled there. The chief of the command center told us to step back off of West Street so that we wouldn't actually see the impact of the jumpers. There was a parking garage there with a ramp. So by going down the ramp a little bit, you still saw and heard the jumpers, but you didn't actually see them hitting on the street. So that's pretty much where everyone was.

We took our masks off and dropped the rollups and stuff because we were assuming that we might be there a while waiting for our assignment and seeing how most of the other companies had done that also.

As far as the companies assembled there, I really only saw 34 Engine. I don't know. A lot of guys had their helmets off too and their gear stacked in specific areas.

While we were there, I went back into the parking garage, and one of the guys in the glass booth back there, I asked him where a faucet was. So came out and turned on a faucet for us so we had some water.

We were just hanging out there, waiting to be called, and eventually Lieutenant James Casey came back, told us to get our gear on, that we were going to head in.

So we went up to West Street. We were right by the command center at that point. We were kind of on the curb to cross West Street. Actually we were told we were going to go to the six sublevel. I'm not sure of what tower.

We were going to go in with an engineer who -- I guess they were having standpipe problems up there. We were going to isolate a standpipe or something. Not that we knew how to do it, but this engineer was going to tell us what valves to turn or whatever. As I said, I'm not even sure what tower we were supposed to go into.

We walked out into West Street maybe ten yards or so, and the chief called us back.

I'm not sure what chief this was. I know Peter Ganci was at this command center, but I'm not sure what chief this actually was.

The chief wanted to get a truck company to go in with us. He was figuring we would probably have to force doors getting down to these sublevels. At that point Lieutenant Casey had sent our chauffeur, Steve Connor, and Brian Russo, who actually had just gotten off the night tour but had ridden down with the rack unit, I believe. He sent them back to 91's rig to get forcible entry tools, rabbit tools or something like that.

In the interim while we were standing there on the curb at West Street, probably three minutes or so after he had told us to go in, that's when we heard the rumble. I looked up, and it was just a black cloud directly overhead.

At that point I was thinking it was a secondary explosion. It looked to me like it was much lower than where the planes had gone in. That was probably just a delay in looking up.

I turned around and looked to see what everyone else was doing, and everyone was running

right down that ramp into the parking garage. So I just dropped the rollup and standpipe kit right there and took off running and made it into the parking garage.

As I was running down the ramp, there was a pillar on the left. I jumped behind it. I was going to throw my mask on, because I was assuming at the time that -- thinking that the World Trade Center -- I thought the top half of the building was falling off, and I was thinking of it falling outward, not really imploding upon itself like it did. So if it was falling our way, we might get buried alive or trapped down in that parking garage.

I was going to throw my mask on, but as soon as I jumped behind the pillar, there was just a black cloud rolling probably five or ten yards away from me, so I just kept running. I didn't know if it was the building or if it was just debris. I had no idea what was in the cloud.

By the time I got to the rear of the parking garage -- it stayed pretty clear back there. It wasn't too bad. There was a stairway

up. There were a ton of guys on the stairwell. I know there was a delay in getting out the door. Whether they got the key or forced the door, I'm not really sure. I stayed down at the bottom there. I had my flashlight on directing people in there.

Once the door was forced or opened or whatever they did, everyone headed up and out the back of the parking garage. I went up there. We moved either a bicycle rack or some type of barrier to hold the door open up top.

While I was standing there, some captain -- I don't know what company -- he saw I had an orange flashlight on my jacket and he said, "Let me have that flashlight. I'm going to go down and search the parking garage." So I said, "All right." So I gave him the flashlight. I said, "I'm going to go down with you."

So we put on our masks and went down into the parking garage. He set up a search rope. The visibility was actually fairly good down there. You could see all the shapes of people. It seemed like everyone who had gotten in the parking garage was fine.

I walked back out to where the ramp met the air, but you really couldn't see too much at that point. You wouldn't see anyone walking around out there. I didn't really see much of anything out there at that point.

I went back out through the garage, back out into like a little park behind the garage. Walking around there, I met up with two guys from my company, Ed Sheehy and Joe Meola, who also had been relieved that morning but had come down.

We just started looking for our lieutenant and the rest of our company at that point. We walked through the park I believe to Vesey Street, and we were going to loop around to come back down into the Trade Center to see if our lieutenant and other members were down there.

I would assume we were on Vesey Street or West Street. I'm not even exactly sure. But a cop started screaming, "The north tower is leaning." We again started running. That came down a couple minutes after that. As I said, I think we were on Vesey Street at that point, but I'm not really sure.

After that it was kind of pandemonium. The U.S. marshals were saying a third plane was coming in. They said there were bombs in all the buildings around there. No one really knew where to assemble. Every time you tried to set up a spot, you were being told to keep moving further north. Eventually we ended up by Stuyvesant High School. That was pretty much it.

Q. Do you have anything else?

A. No, I don't.

CHIEF KENAHAN: It's now 3:48. This interview is concluded. Thank you.

File No. 9110230

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FATHER JOHN DELENDICK

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

MR. TAMBASCO: Today is December 6th. My name is Mike Tambasco with the World Trade Center Task Force. We're on the fourth floor of Nine Metrotech in the conference room, conducting an interview with Father John Delendick into the events of September 11th.

The time now is 1431 hours.

Q. Father, if you would just be good enough to tell us your story from that day.

A. I had just finished saying the 8:30 mass at St. Michael's in Brooklyn. The pager went off and said that a plane had crashed into one of the towers of the Trade Center. I called emergency operations center and said I was responding, and I left for the Trade Center.

I went through the Battery Tunnel. I parked my car as close to the Battery Tunnel as possible and walked to the Trade Center from there along West Street. I stopped for a few minutes to talk to Jerry Barber, who was opposite -- I guess we were standing on the corner of Liberty Street and West. I believe that's where I saw him. I then proceeded down

further.

He told me that the command post was on West Street down in front of the Financial Center. According to this paper, it's Two World Financial Center, Merrill Lynch. They were set up in front of there with two huge garage doors which went underneath the Financial Center.

I spoke to Ganci briefly, told him I was there. I saw Bill Feehan, said hello to him. I stood there for a while talking to Timmy Stackpole and to Chief Ed Henry, both of whom left a few minutes later.

And Henry picked up his tack and said to me: "I've got to go to work," and he went across the street to the Marriott. Timmy Stackpole and I continued to talk -- in fact, people started jumping off the north tower at that point. We were watching that. I said to Timmy I think we should go back to the office.

I should mention that behind us a lot of different companies were staging. That's where they were waiting to move in. I said: "Timmy, we should go back and remind the officers to look after their probies because I don't think

they're going to be able to handle this. I turned around with Timmy, and we both looked and then looked at each other, because no one was handling it, the probies or the veterans.

Timmy at that point took a group of guys -- I'm not sure who was with him -- and went across the street as well. I believe they went to the Marriott. Most people going to the south tower went to the Marriott and went through the Marriott to get there.

The top of the building kind of started to rumble, and we all looked up. It looked --

Q. Let me interrupt you for a second. Were you there when the second plane hit?

A. No. When the second plane hit, I was still in Brooklyn. I was trying to get through the tunnel on Hamilton Avenue. We saw the plane, but I never saw it hit. I remember saying to myself, boy, that guy is awful low in the pattern. I remember saying something really stupid like, you know, did he come down to see what happened with the first one? It never dawned on me that he was heading for the other tower, but that's where it was headed.

We heard a rumbling noise, and it appeared that that first tower, the south tower, had exploded, the top of it. That's what I saw, what a lot of us saw. We ran down underneath the Financial Center.

Q. The garages behind you?

A. The garages.

We were followed by that cloud, that dark black cloud. It was very difficult to breathe, very difficult to see.

I stopped running or I stopped going down when it leveled off. There was like a ramp that went down, and I stopped at the bottom ramp where it leveled off. Bill Feehan was next to me. Ray Downey was over there too, because they both started talking -- I knew it was them because they were talking, so I knew.

I remember asking Ray Downey was it the jet fuel that blew up. He said at that point he thought there were bombs up there because it was too even. As we've since learned, it was the jet fuel that was dropping down that caused all this. But he said it was too even.

Q. Symmetrical?

A. So his original thought was that he thought it was a bomb up there as well.

We then started walking up, back up. I was with Bill Feehan. I'm not sure where Ray Downey went. I understand Pete Ganci found a stairwell, went up a stairwell and went back to the lobby, back to the command post where we were.

Bill and I stopped a few times on the ramp going up. There were some firefighters who had fallen there. I don't know who they were. I didn't really get to see their faces. You couldn't really see much. You trip over them is how --

Q. You found them.

A. We would grab other firefighters to help them down further. They had apparently minor injuries. They were okay, but they had fallen or whatever. We got people to assist them to go down further into the building.

I remember saying to Bill at one point we had to be near the garage doors. I said we should be seeing daylight soon. Little did I know that we weren't going to see daylight. I

didn't even think. He said yeah, you're right.

Next thing we knew, we were outside. There was kind of -- I don't know what to call it, like an island between two garages on the driveway outside that had flowers in it. We were right next to it, so we knew we were outside, couldn't realize. Couldn't see anything.

We didn't know the building came down. We just knew the top of the building exploded and didn't know what happened to the rest of the building. You just couldn't see anything. Things began to lift a little bit.

Just to take a step back, when I got out, we discovered we were outside, somebody said to me there's somebody hurt down on West Street. And I started walking south on West Street. That's when I began to notice fire trucks that were damaged and ambulances on the side and cars destroyed.

I stopped and said where am I going? Where am I looking for this guy who is injured? I have no idea where I'm going. I turned and went back to --

Q. Where the command post was?

A. -- where the command post was.

Ganci was there at this point, and I stood there a few minutes. Pete started yelling, saying to everyone that we should start moving north and we're going to re-form the command post up on West and Chambers Street.

A whole group of us started moving north again. I'm not sure who I was with. We just started moving north. When we got to the corner of West and Vesey, we heard that kind of same rumbling noise. And someone just yelled run, and we all started running. Some people ran north. I ran with a whole bunch of people going towards the river.

Q. West?

A. On Vesey Street, west.

I remember a cop running along next to me. I remember this. This is great. We were running along, and a cop is running next to me. He says: "Father, can I go to confession?" I looked and said: "This is an act of war, isn't it?" He said: "Yeah, I believe so." I said: "Then I'm giving general absolution." I gave everyone general absolution, and I kept running.

Q. You're covered?

A. Also I ran into a bunch of guys from the Secret Service, about 25 or 30 of them, all in their suits. I don't know the name of the street that's behind the World Financial Center.

Q. It might be North End or --

A. It must be North Avenue. They were walking along North, crossing Vesey, and they were going down further. I stopped one of them and I said where are you going? He said one of our members is in the building and we have to go find him. I remember saying to him I don't think it's a good idea going down there right now. He said no, we've got to find him. I said fine, go right ahead, do what you have to do.

I kept going. I walked along the river, and a group of us walked along the river. We walked past the high school, Stuyvesant High School. There's an alleyway between the high school and --

Q. The river?

A. -- the river. I'm not sure what was there. I think the river was there. And we came up to -- back to West Street. Then at that point

we're all standing around. Where is everyone?
Where's Pete? Where's Bill?

Nigro came a little while later.

Apparently he had walked around I think he said South Street. He was down the other way, walked around somehow and found his way back to Chambers Street.

Things began to clear. We were looking, and we realized both buildings were no longer there. Many of us just walked back down West Street back to the towers to see what we could do.

Q. There was --

A. I learned Father Judge was dead, and I began to learn that so many guys were gone.

Q. Heck of a day, huh?

A. I found the worst part of the day was people coming up to me that I knew and there were guys who had sons on the job or fathers on the job or brothers on the job and they would be asking me: Did you see my brother? Have you seen my father? Have you seen my son? I had to tell them no. I didn't even know they were there. That made it very hard.

Q. Father, is there anything else you can think of that you might like to add just for the history, any feelings, anything else? Feel free. If not --

A. No, I think that's about it, I guess.

Q. In that case I thank you for the interview?

MR. TAMBASCO: And the time is now 1443 hours.

File No. 9110231

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM JOHNSON

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

W. JOHNSON

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 6, 2001. The time is 1315 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the New York City Fire Department conducting an interview with the following individual, Firefighter William Johnson, fireman first, assigned to ladder 147, detailed to the research and development unit. I'm interviewing him at 59 Page Avenue, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman Johnson, please tell me what happened while you were there?

A. The morning of September 11, I reported to the office of R and D, where on notification of the accident at the World Trade Center, we responded in the R and D vehicle. Along with Lieutenant Stein, Lieutenant Monachelli, Firefighter Stein and myself. We responded through the Midtown Tunnel en route to the World Trade Center. On arriving at Church Street and Vesey Street, we pulled our Suburban into the corner.

As we exited the vehicle, I noticed ESU units circling the area, who advised us to keep our rig closer to the corner, so in the process of backing our rig into the corner, as I looked up, I could at that moment see the first building coming down. In that

W. JOHNSON

instance, we all started to make our way back up Vesey and at that point I spotted a doorway. I jumped into the doorway and stayed there as the debris and rubble came down from the first World Trade Center.

As it cleared, or started to clear, I noticed a few civilians walking around and we escorted them into the buildings. After escorting the civilians into the buildings, we exited, regrouped at the Suburban, donned our masks, crossed the street going toward building 5, where we encountered who we thought was Father Judge.

As they brought Father Judge to us, we examined him quickly, noticing that there was no pulse and we left him in the hands of EMS. As we made our way into building 5 we were notified that there were a couple of hundred people trapped in the subway below. In an attempt to try to go down there, the second building started to collapse.

Again heading up towards Vesey, making our way up, this time I was unable to get to cover. I was struck by the cloud in the middle of the street. We stayed in the middle of the street, for a period of let's say 5 to 10 minutes until everything cleared again.

W. JOHNSON

Getting out of that cloud, we regrouped back at the corner of Broadway and Vesey, where Lieutenant Stein began the operations of a command post. I started my way back down Vesey Street again, to look for Lieutenant Monachelli, who lost us. We lost each other as a matter of fact. We regrouped. I found Lieutenant Monachelli on the corner of Church and Vesey. From that point we started to make a couple of surveys and searches of the area. Noticing Ladder 119's rig, and a couple of members from that company and that's about all I can remember.

For an hour or two we stood there searching and then I was taken to Bellevue Hospital. I couldn't see any more. I had pretty bad eye problems, so they transported me to Bellevue where I stayed for I believe an hour and a half. I was treated, released and the health team brought me back home. That was it.

Q. Okay, when you say you were -- you saw the people that were with Judge, any ID, any unit IDs on them?

A. I remember seeing a court officer, an OEM person with an OEM jacket on and an EMS driver, I think think it was, but that's about the only people I can remember seeing.

W. JOHNSON

Q. Okay. Before the second building came down or subsequent to your arrival, did you happen to see any other Fire Department units that you could identify at any place?

A. I saw Engine 226. I don't know exactly where they were located right now, but I remember seeing 226 on the rig. I think they were on that Church and Vesey corner.

Q. Other than the vehicle, you didn't see any Fire Department personnel?

A. No, I didn't see any Fire Department personnel.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay, that concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110235

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PATRICK SULLIVAN

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

P. SULLIVAN

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 5, 2001. The time is 1:40 p.m. This is Firefighter Patrick Sullivan's interview from the World Trade Center. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns of the Safety Battalion.

Q. If you would Pat, please tell me about what you saw or heard on that day when you guys responded to the Trade Center?

A. When I first saw the plane crash on the news, I was getting relieved. I was coming off a 24 and I was supposed to be going home. I was actually in my civilian clothes. After the first plane hit, they had a voice alarm announcement and ordered everyone going home to stay and every Engine would be riding with five men. I don't know how long -- I changed back into my uniform. I don't know how long it was after that, 5 minutes, 10 minutes, we responded. A little after the 48 went.

We went through the tunnel as we were responding. We were going over into the Gowanus through the tunnel, we were supposed to go to the staging area outside the tunnel and as we were going, you could see the building, you could see the fire, you could see the flames and you could also see the smoke

P. SULLIVAN

coming out of the building. There was also papers blowing as far as here, regular sheets of paper blowing through the air. I guess that's from when the plane hit.

We went to the staging area. We stayed at the staging area for maybe 5, 10 minutes until all the companies that were going on the ticket, everyone was there, they all grouped together and we went. I don't know all the companies that were there, but I know 201 was with us. I couldn't tell you what other companies were there at the time.

We responded and we went through the tunnel. We came up the West Side Highway on the right side of the divider and we were stopped by either a Chief or a police officer. We couldn't go any further because there was organic matter in the street and they were considering it evidence. There was a part of a body probably from when the plane hit.

So we got out of the rig and we started walking. We walked maybe 50 feet further and there was a Deputy Chief there. I don't know the Deputy Chief's name. He was there with his aide. He was an on duty Deputy Chief. He had an official car. There was another Deputy Chief there, I think he came in his

P. SULLIVAN

private car, because he was there with the other Chief, unless they were riding with 2, which could have been two. Maybe they both took the run in when they got it.

Anyway he told us drop our roll ups, that we were going to walk up, we were going to go to the 40th floor. I think there was another staging area on the 40th floor, tower two, the south tower, if that's tower two, the one closer to the Battery Tunnel. We were going to walk up. He said it's going to take 40 minutes to an hour to get up there, to drop our roll ups and start walking.

He said watch out for bodies, bodies coming down like leaves from a tree. They were coming down all over the place. He said God be with you and we started walking.

As we started walking, I was looking straight up at the tower and I saw the top of the tower coming down. I saw the black smoke, sort of like pushing out, and I saw debris starting to come out from the building, probably from one floor depressing on the other, blowing everything out and I knew it was coming down.

I turned around and I yelled to the guys that

P. SULLIVAN

were with me to run. They seemed to be just standing there, frozen. I don't know if it was disbelief or shock or what. But they snapped out of it and they turned around and started running. As we started running, we were right -- there's a, on the West Side Highway, there is a pass through. There is a concrete divider that goes between the two lanes, north and south, and there is a pass through right on the other side of the pedestrian bridge that didn't come down.

That's where we were, walking towards 2 World Trade Center. That's where we were when we started walking. When I saw the building was coming down, I turned around and started running back towards Albany Street. I was trying to get around another building and down the block. I saw tomorrow Tommy Dun was with me. He was in front of me. He was our proby, and another guy, Darren Jacobs, he was in front of me as well.

I didn't get as far as Darren and Tommy. Tommy must have been 30 feet in front of me and after the collapse he couldn't hear me. I was calling for him. Darren kept on running. I don't know where he wound up ending up, but Tommy Dunn was maybe 30 feet in front of me. I was right by a Suburban car.

P. SULLIVAN

As I was running, there was debris, I don't know what it was, rocks or part of the building, shooting over my head, hitting the ground and it was going through windows and taking cars out. I ran as fast as I could and as far as I could until the black dust cloud overtook me and I couldn't see any more. I knew that there was a car there because I saw it just before it blacked out. I went over to the car and I thought not to go under the car, because if something landed on the car it would crush me and the car. I thought I would just go next to it like a void, try to make a void and hope for the best.

I remember thinking that -- first I remember praying that I was going to make it out of there alive, but I didn't think I was going to. I didn't think I was going to make it out of there. I prayed that my family would be okay. My wife and my boy would be okay, and I waited for something substantial to land on me and I was hoping it was going to be quick. I was hoping I wouldn't be trapped for any period of time. I was getting pelted with -- it felt like soft balls. I couldn't breathe. It was like putting your face in a bag of cement and trying to take a deep breath.

I couldn't get any air. It was like holding

P. SULLIVAN

your breath, trying to breathe in and breathe out. Nothing was going in and nothing was going out. So I tried to take my mask. This all happened in between maybe 15 and 30 seconds. I tried to take my mask and take a hit off my mask and it didn't work. There was no air coming out of it. There was a pile of dust inside so I shook it out. Shook all the dust out and tried to take another breath. It just wasn't giving me any air. I remember trying to turn the valve again, thinking that my mask wasn't on, but it was on. It just wasn't working. It was clogged up with shit in it. I banged it a couple of times. I finally got a little bit of a breath out of the mask and shortly after that, it started clearing up anyway. I could start seeing daylight through the dust.

I remember it being very very quiet, like being under water. I was calling out to my proby. I was yelling his name and I was yelling, you know, anybody in 240, because I didn't have a radio and I didn't know if anybody else made it. He couldn't hear me calling. He must have been maybe 30 feet in front of me. The sound must have been like not traveling through the air. It must have been stopping dead because it was so thick.

P. SULLIVAN

After that, I got up and I started seeing, I started hearing pass alarms going off. I started walking around. I started looking for my company. I couldn't find anyone from my company. I was on Albany Street. I went down to -- one more block and I turned around and went back to the rig. I figured maybe guys would go back to the rig. That's where I ran into John Winkler. And we tried to test the hydrant and hook up to a hydrant to put out car fires. There were a bunch of car fires right by the rig.

There was a Deputy Chief's rig on fire that was extended to 113's rig. There was a big ambulance, like a rescue company truck, but it wasn't a rescue company truck. It was a huge ambulance. It must have had Scott bottles or oxygen bottles on it. These were going off. You would hear the air go SSS boom and they were exploding. So we stretched a line and tried to put that out. He could only use booster water.

We would open up the hydrants. The hydrants weren't working. The water main broke or something. So after we ran our booster water, the rig was basically useless. 113's rig went up and we tried to get a line from the fire boats to supply one of the rigs so we could get some water.

P. SULLIVAN

At that point I had to leave because I couldn't see any more. I couldn't open my eyes. I had to rinse my eyes out quite a few times during the course of what we were doing. After a while I couldn't open my eyes any more. There was fiberglass or whatever the hell was in there. They led me. Two guys led me to the water by a rope and a cop drove me to an ambulance.

From the ambulance they rinsed my eyes out again. I walked to the tunnel and hitched a ride with a Port Authority guy to the other side and came back to the fire house. That must have been about 2:00 or so or 3:00 in the afternoon. I don't know if I left anything out, but that's basically what happened, as I remember it.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Great. Thanks, Pat.

It's 1:51 p.m., this is the conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110236

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN WINKLER

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today is the 5th of December, 2001. The time is 1:25 p.m. This is Engine 240. My name is Battalion Chief Robert Burns, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview of Firefighter John Winkler, Engine 240. This is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Maybe, John, you can tell me in your own words what happened at the Trade Center from the time that you responded to the scene until you guys left the scene.

A. When we received the ticket, we were assigned to the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. There was a staging area. We were the first ones there. On the arrival of the other companies, we received a ticket to respond to West Street, West and Liberty.

I was driving that day. I went through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, came up West Street. There was a chief at West and Albany who stopped us right on West Street and told us to remain right here.

Members of my company got out, grabbed

their rollups, reported to the chief that was on the sidewalk on the west side sidewalk of West Street. This was after the second plane hit, before the first tower came down.

I was told to stay with the rig. I proceeded to put my bunker gear on when I looked up and I saw the tower falling, the first tower coming down. I jumped into the cab, put my helmet on and just ducked and just waited. It shattered the windows, shook the rig.

While sitting in the rig, I heard over the radio that "I'm trapped underneath the rig." So I responded -- I'm not sure if I responded on the department radio or on the handy talky -- "Engine 240 chauffeur coming to get you."

I climbed out of the rig, climbed over the rubble, got my mask and went forward and walked north on West Street. Right before the south pedestrian bridge, there was I believe it was one of our members stuck under an ambulance. There was another fireman with him. He said, "We have a guy under the ambulance here."

I gave a mayday on the radio that I'm 240 chauffeur, we have a guy stuck under an

ambulance by the south bridge. I then proceeded to grab members from Ladder 14. We grabbed their air bags, went back to the ambulance. By that time the guy was already out. The member was out. So I left 113.

I went back south on West Street to where 240 was. At that time I was told by Chief I don't know who that we have to start putting these fire outs. There were numerous car vehicles on fire. There were also ESU vehicles on fire. I was told they have ammunition in them and we have to get them out.

Tested the hydrant; there was water. Connected to the hydrant; there was no water. In the meantime I put the rig in pumps. One of my members stretched a line with the help from other firefighters. While I was in pumps, I used that as a booster and was putting car fires out.

We tried to get another hydrant. Same thing: opened the hydrant; there was water. Connected to it, there wasn't enough water. While doing all of this, he ran out of booster line.

The best I can remember, we just got

together. That's when the second tower came down. I dove behind a chief's rig, the two of us, and same thing. We were down there for a while. Mouth full of the dust, choking on it. Couldn't see for a while. Finally it cleared up a little bit to see.

We regrouped, got a couple of our guys. Everybody proceeded to walk down Albany to the water, where we started stretching lines to the fire boat. We continued stretching lines, lengths of hose, up Albany Street to West Street.

Pretty much the rest of the day that's what we were doing, taking lines from the fire from the water up Albany Street, down Albany to Washington, around, and just continued doing that most of the day. That's about it.

Q. Let me ask you a question, John. When you said you saw chiefs when you came in, do you know the name or the identity of the battalion or --

A. I know one of them that was on the sidewalk was Chief Lakiotes.

Q. Okay, from the Safety Battalion.

A. He was on the sidewalk. My company

reported to him. There was another chief in the street that stopped me and said "Keep the rig right here." I was double parked right next to I believe it was 210, right behind Ladder 113.

I didn't catch his name, but I think he was the guy that was pretty much running this area, telling us to stretch lines, we've got to get hose, we've got to put fires out. I'm not sure of his name.

Q. Okay. Great. Okay, John, thanks for the interview.

CHIEF BURNS: The time is 1:29 p.m.

File No. 9110237

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER OWEN CARLOCK

Interview Date: December 5th, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 5th, 2001. The time is 4:17 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Owen Carlock, Ladder 122, detailed on the day of the incident to Engine 220. This is in reference to the events that occurred on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Owen, if you would, just tell us in your own words exactly what happened that day.

A. We took the Brooklyn Bridge, which was closed. We had trouble getting there from here with all the traffic. We took the Brooklyn Bridge, which was emptied at Chambers Street, a lot of traffic, obviously, in Manhattan.

We went to West Street, turned left on West. We picked up a straggler, John Jermyn, from the -- he used to be here in 122. He works in the Fire Department Museum. We picked him up and drove around to -- as near as I can figure out, I think it was between Murray and Barclay Street, where we left the rig on the southbound lanes.

We walked down the southbound lanes to I guess it was the command post. Captain Grabher went over there, and they told him to go to the south tower. So he said he wasn't going to take Liberty because of the jumpers.

So we went to some building on the corner of Albany and West Street that's under construction. It's being renovated. We went that way. We took Albany past Washington, and then we were on our way to Greenwich? No, it was at Washington when the tower came down on us. Somebody yelled "Oh, shit, here it comes." It was coming towards us.

So we dove behind the Deutsche Bank, and the five of us -- three went back, four went ahead, the seven of us. Four of us laid behind that building, waiting. We thought we were going to die.

After that we tried to take a window in the back of the bank. We did take a window, but behind it was a steel wall, corrugated tin or whatever. We couldn't get into the window.

They followed me. I had the light. They followed me, and we went into Deutsche Bank

into the side entrance, got our wits about us, and we went across the street to get Eddie and George and Mike Schroeck.

Then we were going to make our way back to the command center when the north tower came down. We ducked into some hotel. I don't know what hotel it was. It was on West Street south of Albany.

After that came down and the stuff cleared, the officer said, "Listen, we're not going to go back to that area. We're going to come around, because we don't know what else is going to come down, what else could come tumbling down."

So we went over to the water, and from there we helped Marine 6 put it into -- I think it was Captain Fuentes. They dug him out. He was banged up pretty good. We helped put him on the boat.

At that time Captain Grabher told Eddie Plunkett and myself, "Go find a rig and back it up to the fire boat, Marine 9, which is already there." He said, "We're going to at least get water as best as we can to the towers."

Eddie and I found I don't know whose rig it was. We backed it up to the fire hose, took the three and a half off of there and went as far as we could. Then another rig came, and they stretched their three and a half off the rig we were on, and then they left.

I went back to find Captain Grabher, Mike Schroeck, George and Dean. They were nowhere to be found. Later on I found out they were on the ninth floor of one of the apartment buildings on the west side of West Street, fighting the fire on the ninth floor. That's why I couldn't find them. I had no radio. I had no clue where they were.

So I hooked up after a while with Chief Congiusta of 48. He and I went down with a couple other guys from 240 into the parking lot of the Vista to look for 6 Truck, which was missing at the time. We were standing there and waited for him to come out, and he never came out. He took an underground passageway and came out on Barclay Street.

After that I hooked up with four guys, recall guys. I hooked up with 220 and stayed the

rest of the night until 11:30 and went to the hospital. I had my eyes cleaned out.

As far as the companies, somebody said 205 was right in front of us, and I don't remember seeing them. That's the best I can tell you where we were, where everybody is, that's what we did the day of the attack.

CHIEF BURNS: That concludes our interview. The time is 4:22 p.m.

File No. 9110239

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER GERARD CASEY

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today is the 5th of December, 2001. The time is 3:59 p.m. I am Chief Robert Burns of the Safety Battalion conducting an interview with Firefighter Second Grade Casey from Ladder 122 in regard to the events that took place on September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you would, just tell me in your own words what happened at the World Trade Center fire.

A. We received the alarm about a quarter to 9. We responded to the tunnel with 132, 105, 101 and 131. 101 might have made -- I think 131. We got stuck in the tunnel for ten minutes. There was a car with two firefighters. They cleared out the left lane, and we finally made it through the tunnel.

We were last in line because we were getting into the tunnel via the service lane, and 105 and 132 were closer in, closer to the tunnel portals than we were, because we were in the service lane. So we ended up behind them. 105 took the front of the north tower. We went with 132 and I believe 131 or 101, I'm not sure.

We had to pull the rig out. We had spots in front of the rig where there were a lot of bodies and debris in front of us, body parts. We were in front of the north tower where the staging area was.

We positioned the rig up around -- passed the north tower at Vesey Street and we proceeded to walk towards the north tower at the staging area, which is in front of the north tower. There were two garages directly across the street from the north tower.

The incident commander and Ganci, Feehan was standing there too, divided up the trucks and the engines, engines on one side of the garage, trucks on the other side. We couldn't go through the front of the north tower because there were too many bodies on the ground.

So he wanted us to go to the south tower, all the truck companies that were in that garage bay front area, about five truck companies. We grabbed extra bottles, proceeded to the overpass that is next to the Marriott, I believe, on West Street, and we had to go underneath the overpass to avoid debris falling

from the south tower and bodies. People were jumping.

We made it across there in time to get into the building. 132, 105 and 101 I saw. When we were in the lobby, I saw them. We were standing fast in the Marriott lobby. Close to the doors where the elevators were in the south tower was a doorway that leads into the lobby.

That was the last known positions I know that I saw them, those companies I mentioned that were next to us. I spoke to Vinny Brunton on the Brooklyn Battery's Brooklyn side. We thought we were going to be there all day. They were giving us water. Guys were cooling off. We knew we were going up. We didn't know if we could take any elevators at that point. Later on we found out we were going to go up and walked up.

We got the order to move, to go ahead and go forward. We started putting our gear on. Other companies moved up ahead of us maybe 20 feet, 25 feet ahead of us. There was a short distance between us, and 131 was behind us, waiting on us to move. We were just moving up in

the line going in. I believe 24 Truck was behind 131. So it was us, 131 and 24 Truck. In front of us was 132, 105 and 101.

We put our gear on, started going moving forward, and that's when we heard the rumbling. Somebody screamed, "The building's coming down." I had one shoulder strap on, I dropped my mask and I turned around and made it to -- I tried to run towards the restaurant to get out.

I didn't get any more than one step and everything just turned black, and I got pulled into a corner in there that was still standing. My helmet came off. I had a concussion, I believe. That was it. At that point I didn't think I was going to make it out alive. I thought that was it.

I made noise at the door. I banged on the door really loud before guys came to me. One guy from 24 Truck was bleeding really bad. He had no face piece on his regulator. I said, "Let's get this door open." I put my light on and I started banging and making a lot of noise. Other guys came and started lifting up the door.

I heard a guy from my company screaming, "I've got the way out. It's over here." I followed his voice with two other firemen. I followed his voice.

That's pretty much what I remember as far as locations and locations of the companies that I saw that were operating.

Q. Which tower were you operating in?

A. South tower.

Q. South tower.

From there where did you go? Did you go to EMS?

A. I came out. I came out of the crater. The street was gone, the restaurant and everything was gone. I saw Koyles and Vitiello. They were alive. I saw them and then I turned around and I couldn't see them. Walker had come out. I turned around and Koyles was gone. I don't know where he went.

I told Vitiello, I said, "Follow me," because he's a proby. Then I turned around and he was gone. He walked another way. I walked up -- by the overpass was a fire truck there. There was a fireman crushed. There was another guy who

was screaming, going crazy. I walked another 50 feet and there was another guy that was dead. There were bodies everywhere.

I walked another like 50 feet. I was limping. I hurt my knee, my back. My eyes were closing. I couldn't see. I bumped into a guy on the floor. I helped him. He was hurting. He was injured bad. I started walking with him. Another fireman came over and helped me.

We just kept walking, and we ended up at the water marina. A boat came over, and they pretty much threw us on the boat. They said, "You guys are banged up. Get on the boat." And that was it.

Q. Okay, Jerry, thanks for the interview.

CHIEF BURNS: It's 4:06 p.m. This is the end of the interview.

File No. 9110240

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN PICARELLO

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 6th at approximately 1320 hours. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes from the safety command. I'm here to interview --

FIREFIGHTER PICARELLO: John Picarello, 40 Battalion.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: -- regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you can start me off with the response. I guess it was you and Chief Henry.

A. Right. We responded from quarters with some units, went down toward Fourth Avenue. Our original assignment was to a staging area on the Brooklyn side of the Battery Tunnel. We reached somewhere around the tunnel when the second plane hit. The second plane hadn't hit yet. So it was right about that time the second plane hit.

The tunnel was a mess. They were trying to clear it for the rest of the emergency vehicles and everybody else and their mother trying to get out of the city.

I went through the tunnel, made a right out of the tunnel onto West Street and went up as

far as I could. I dropped off Chief Henry and his equipment. Then I backed up to get the vehicle out of the middle of the street and parked it by West and Rector on West Street just short of Rector Street.

Q. Here's a map. That may help you a little bit.

A. Okay. That's where I parked, by Rector Street.

So I got out and suited up and told Chief Henry I'd meet up with him.

After parking it, I walked along West Street up to about Liberty, just a little past I guess it's the south bridge, the one that's by Liberty. I was there for a few minutes, just like everybody else, just looking up at the two gaping holes, looking at the towers, debris falling.

I remember in particular my attention was on the north tower, just watching jumpers and people falling. I don't know much about the south tower, the huge hole. My attention I just know was mostly toward the north tower.

After a few minutes walking underneath

that south bridge, just because of the debris that was coming down, I made my way into the lobby of the hotel through the corner. There's a bar and grill or something there.

Q. Tall Ships?

A. I don't remember the name of it. I do remember that's where I entered. There was some EMS workers taking people out, swapping helmets with people so they can get across the street. I went through there, and walking through there you can go through a double doorway into the lobby.

So I got into the lobby of the hotel. There were some other guys there, the Fire Department, police, EMS. I always said there had to be about a hundred people. That's what I said, in my estimation. There were a lot of people there.

I walked through the lobby and got to about, I'd say, maybe halfway through to the center of it, met up with Chief Henry. There was another chief there. I wasn't sure exactly if he was a deputy or acting deputy. I wasn't sure. He was giving out assignments.

So it was me and Chief Henry. There

were two other guys to my left, and there was Chief Stack on my right. I just remember looking up and seeing Safety Battalion. I never met him before. That was the first time I met him. So there was a group of us.

Our assignment was either the 70th or the 75th floor of the north tower. They gave us some units that Chief Henry had, so I didn't have them, and said some of them already started up and just meet up with them and go as far as you could.

I'd say we were there just maybe a couple of minutes. We took a couple of steps --

(Interruption.)

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Okay. We're continuing with the tape. We stopped it momentarily to answer the phone.

Q. John, you said you're in the lobby now. You saw Chief Stack with Chief Henry, and you were assigned to go to the 75th floor. Some of the units had already started up. You go?

A. Yeah. We go meet up with them.

So we were there a few minutes, and we started to walk, make our way through the lobby

to the other side. I'd say we got maybe ten steps. We didn't go very far. I heard sort of like a rumbling sound. We stopped, looked at each other, and took off.

We just took off away from the doors. Instead of running out, we ran to our right, which would be toward the walls. It just happened really quick. I just remember running. Stack was in front of me. Henry went to my left with the other guys.

In about a second or two, you just heard like a ba-ba-ba-boom, and everything just came down and everything was pitch-black. I landed on top of Stack, and we were both in the corner by the wall. Everything was just quiet, pitch-black, quiet I guess for a few seconds or so, I would imagine.

We got up. Stack had gotten up. He didn't have his helmet. He looked like he was trying to get out of his turnout. He got out of his turnout. He asked me to give him a hand with it. He pulled on it, pulled out his flashlight, and it was half under the wall. So the wall we were against probably shifted. His turnout was

under the wall, so we just left it.

Then we started hearing some guys calling. Chief Henry was trying to call outside on the handy talky. Nobody was responding. It was almost like it was dead. You could hear nothing on the handy talkies, but you could hear some muffled sounds, both guys calling for units and some guys calling for help.

About three or four feet behind me, when I stood up and Stack stood up, from ceiling to floor was all collapsed down, so we were cut off from the rest of the lobby. I couldn't see too far in front of us, but I could see debris all over the place.

Immediately to our right was the wall that we were against. I don't know, it looked like a coat check. That's the best I can make out of it. In there I could see debris probably shoulder high, and I could see the wall was open on the other side of that. You could see that it was collapsed.

Right to my right also there was a guy yelling for help. I found out later -- I don't know if he was an officer or what, but I do know

that he made it out. But he was buried. It looked like he was in a wall. I don't know if it was in a hallway, but it looked like he was in a wall.

So there were a few of us, I'd say three or four of us, trying to dig him out, throwing stuff, chairs and everything, I would say maybe 15 minutes. It seemed longer, but it was probably about 15 minutes digging him out. He came out. He was able to walk.

Q. Firefighter?

A. He was a firefighter.

Q. You don't have any idea who he was?

A. No. The group I was with right there, I knew nobody.

Q. You had lost Larry? You had separated from Larry at this point?

A. No, Larry was with me the whole time.

Q. Okay. So the other group, you only knew Larry?

A. Yeah. It was like we were about two groups. After the collapse, I'd say it was probably maybe 12 to possibly 15 people. There was about 12 of us. But with that there were

also some hotel employees that were with us. It wasn't only members.

Q. Of the 12 or 15 members besides Larry, did you know anybody else that was there with you?

A. No.

Q. Chief Henry wasn't with you at this point?

A. Chief Henry was with us, yeah. He was --

Q. Part of the group. So besides Larry, Stack and Chief Henry --

A. No, I didn't know anybody else.

Q. -- you didn't know anybody else?

A. No. I did know there was another battalion chief there.

Q. Big tall guy with gray hair?

A. I don't know if he had gray hair. Everybody had gray hair.

Q. I know. O'Flaherty?

A. That's what I found out. His arm was messed up. That's what I remember. I remember his arm -- he put his hand in the pocket of his turnout and he just couldn't use it. He was

there.

Q. Chief Downey? Do you know Chief Downey?

A. I don't know Chief Downey, no.

I remember after a few minutes digging this guy out, Henry and one group started ahead of us. We felt like a cool breeze in our face, so we decided just follow that. They went on ahead. So we were a little bit ways behind them after we got this guy out.

We started to walk. We came down to I guess it was a corner, and there were three doors on the left. One was a stairway that went downstairs. That was pitch-black. We didn't think that was a good option. There was a stairway from the stairs next one.

The next one opened into a corridor that I thought looked like a service entrance, because it was cinder block, concrete. Then after that there were double doors with an exit sign. But we elected just to stay with that second door because when you opened it up we could see light all the way down at the end of the hall. So we elected to go down there.

At that point I don't know exactly how many were with us, but I do know there were some hotel employees. There was a big heavy guy. His leg looked a little mangled.

Q. A hotel employee?

A. A hotel employee.

Stack was helping him. Another one of the guys was helping him. We were just sort of helping him along down that hallway.

Q. In reference point, walking north towards tower one, do you think?

A. Okay, the best I can tell is when we got out, if I could say standing in that lobby right where we were after the collapse, if to my left was West Street, let's just say, then it was sort of in that direction. It was north, it would be, towards West Street but a little towards north. It was at an angle.

The hallway that we went down was on our left, but it did open up onto West Street. We came to the end of it. There was an opening. I don't know if it was a knee wall or originally it was a window. I have no idea. But it did open up onto West Street. You could see out onto

West Street, nothing but rubble everywhere.

I remember looking out. I didn't think I was on West Street at first, because I thought there was a building on my left, a big slant, looked like it was going to come down. That looked like it might have been those big pieces that came down and stuck in West Street.

Chief Ganci was out there. So I saw him. There were some other members across the street, and at that point Ganci was waving guys out, telling them to get out. So some of the guys went over -- it was about four feet high. They went over that, went out across West Street onto the other side.

I remember to my left I saw two members coming toward the building and actually going in. One guy I don't know. The second one I do remember from 10 Truck was Georgie Bachman. Georgie Bachman was going in. It almost looked like a bay or something. I'm not sure. I remember him going in.

So I stuck my head back in and just wanted to go over, just head out. I was just waiting for a lull in the debris; to then run

across.

At that point there were two or three guys who went to our right. If you're facing that opening on West Street, to my right there was another little hallway that went out. There was a door at the end of that and a set of stairs that also went downstairs.

The guys tried to open that door. It opened about maybe six inches, and you could see there was a ton of debris behind it. They couldn't get it open. They were going to look for another way out.

I'm not sure who went down the stairs, but I believe two members went down the stairs. I don't know who they were. They went down those stairs, looking for another way out. That's the point when I got separated from Chief Henry. So I don't know which way he went.

I came back to the area where all of us were. They had found a chair for this guy, big guy. He was sitting down. Now we were just questioning, do we lift him up, get him over the wall, who wants to go next?

At that point Ganci was motioning to

us, "Come on. Let's get out." Stack said that he'll wait for another two guys who were still lagging behind and going to come up. I said, "I'll wait for them." He told me, "No, you go ahead and go."

So I went over the wall, and Ganci called me to him. He had told me that they had just moved the command post. He said they're probably not set up yet, but it's up toward Vesey Street.

He wanted me to go to the command post. He said he wants four trucks if they've got them, if there's a squad and a rescue available. He said just bring them back here as soon as possible. He just told me, go ahead, go.

That's when I left the building, left Ganci. I started walking north on West Street. I remember getting under the north bridge. I stopped for a few seconds just to catch my breath. I don't know how long I was there, probably about 30 seconds, I guess. I started to walk again. I don't know how far I walked, just a little ways, and started to hear that rumbling sound again.

I looked up, and the first thing I saw was the aerial on the top of the tower just rocking one way and rocking the other way, and all of a sudden there it goes. So I took off.

I remember running diagonally. I ran across Vesey diagonally to the other side of West Street. I do remember making it across Vesey. The next thing I know, I could feel pressure behind me. I could feel all sorts of stuff. You could feel it coming.

I do remember out of the corner of my eye things started looking grayish and dark. There was a truck there. A lot of vehicles were parked. There was a truck there. At that point I just dove behind the truck --

Q. Apparatus?

A. No, it wasn't apparatus. It was a plain truck. I don't even remember if it was either a van or a pickup. I'm not sure which. I saw the front of the truck.

I dove behind the truck. Just as I hit the floor, it was like this black just blew past me. It was like a hurricane. It just blew past. You could hear stuff breaking and everything. I

just covered up.

When that stopped, I just remember opening my eyes and it was pitch-black. I couldn't see anything. I do remember it was just silence. You heard nothing, no radio transmissions, not even a call for help for a second or two. Everything was quiet. I didn't know, did I get buried or something, whatever. I took a breath. It felt like somebody threw a handful of sawdust in my mouth. The whole thing, vomiting and everything else.

At that point when it cleared, the first transmission I heard was Chief Henry calling me. So I acknowledged him and told him that I made it out, I was okay. He said he made it out. He was a little bit pinned under stuff, but he said, "I can get out of it." Nothing he felt was serious. So I told him "meet up with you later," because he wasn't sure where he was.

So at that point I was able to make it to my feet. I remember turning around looking toward where the buildings were. I don't have to tell you what it looked like. It was just a mess. The thing that struck me was just looking

at the north bridge. I was just there. It was just crushed to the ground, rubble all over the place.

The first person I actually saw was actually Father John Delendick. He had told me about Father Judge.

I made it to an ambulance, got taken care of a little bit, and just went back to see whatever it is that I could do. So I actually didn't leave the scene until about 12:30, 1:00. I went to Roosevelt Hospital and came back to the scene.

Q. So the last place you saw Larry Stack --

A. The last place I saw Larry --

Q. -- would be east of West Street inside some part of the building?

A. Yeah, I don't know what part of the building, where that is. This really doesn't help me at all. I went back on Monday the 15th and just looked at the hotel. I couldn't make heads or tails of where we came out.

Q. But from your description, I'm guessing you were either at the very north end of the

hotel or somehow had gotten into tower one.

A. Something like that. Somebody told me that we came out in the north tower, but then again I can't --

Q. No, I understand. The general area.

A. That would be accurate, because I do remember when I started to walk, when I left Ganci and went north -- I didn't walk very far at all and I was under that north bridge.

Stack, the last time I saw him was when I went over that little wall or out the window, whatever that thing was. He was standing there with two or three other members and some hotel personnel and one of the staff guys, the heavysset guy. He couldn't walk. His leg was really messed up.

Q. Brian went out over the wall too, I think, prior to you getting back. Brian and Henry went over that wall when you went left to go see the other firefighters or something by the stairwell, you said, that went down?

A. Right.

Q. When you got separated from Henry.

A. I got separated just prior to reaching

that big opening. He had told me he was going to down the stairway. I do remember he had somebody there with a little flashlight or something. It wasn't even ours. I think one of the hotel employees had it. So that I remember.

But I had stopped at that point and turned around with Stack. There was a number of others. We just stopped, and we were just helping lead these people out. So Henry went down the stairs with the other group. That was the first group. We were sort of behind after we helped this guy out.

Q. You went down the same staircase, though?

A. No. It was the same staircase that was that first door. We didn't go down there. We passed that. We went through the second door, which was the long hallway and went through the opening.

Q. Brian talked about going over a wall with Henry.

A. So that might be, then, that second stairway, because there was another one -- you reached the end of the hall, there's the opening,

and then to the right there's a stairway. I don't know where that goes.

Q. He explains it almost like you did. In fact, they had to put a chair in front of the wall so Eddie could step on the chair and get out.

A. Right. He was ahead of us, because there was a chair there by the opening. That's the chair we used for this big heavy guy.

Q. That was probably the chair that they used to step on to help everybody, Brian with his broken arm or his broken shoulder. They couldn't get over this wall; it was just high enough. Eddie probably couldn't get over. So they knew they had this chair there to step on and get over from our talk with Ladder 9.

A. Yeah.

Q. So this chair was there when you --

A. It was already there by the opening.

Q. So that was probably the chair they used to go through the opening.

A. Right.

Q. That's the last time you saw Larry and the heavysset --

A. Yeah, the last time was right by that opening. That was it. That's the last time I saw him. That's the last place I saw Ganci.

Q. Did you see Commissioner Feehan up there also?

A. No, I didn't see him.

Q. You don't know what Ray Downey looks like to know if you saw him at all?

A. No.

Some of the faces -- after the collapse, it was so dark. Even if I did, I didn't know if they were with me or not.

Q. Right, exactly.

A. That's basically it.

Q. Thank you, John.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: That concludes the interview. It is now 1547.

File No. 9110242

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MIKE ZECHEWYTZ

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

M. ZECHEWYTZ

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today is December 5th, 2001. The time is approximately 1820. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes, Safety Command, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER ZECHEWYTZ: Michael Zechewytz, engine 278, firefighter.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: This is in regard to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Mike, do me a favor and just tell me in your own words from probably the time you started responding with the company to the events that unfolded for you that day.

A. Well, I remember we were drinking coffee in the kitchen and we saw on the news breaking story on Channel 5 that a plane just hit. I remember I was right by the TV set and I said, "That must have been a drunk pilot." I mean, it was clear outside. So we were like, "Wow, the guy must have had a few last night or something."

So then Roger Jackson and myself went out to the front to see the smoke. If you were in front of the firehouse and you looked over to the right, you saw the smoke. Then he called and he goes, "Zech." That's

M. ZECHEWYTZ

my nickname. He goes, "Zech, look," and we saw the other plane going from left to right with its nose down.

So then we ran back in the kitchen, and then maybe 30 seconds later the news said that a bomb went off in the second building. But then they saw in slow motion it was a plane. So that was the plane that we saw go into it. Then the 4 responded, I forget what alarm, maybe third alarm, and then we went on the fifth alarm.

Then we went to the staging area right by the tunnel. 228 went through the tunnel and they couldn't make contact with them for a while. Then there was a collapse. Someone said it might be a collapse on the south side of the tunnel. Then we didn't hear from them and then later on they went through. There must have been a lot of debris in there.

Q. Let me ask you a question before we go any further. Were you there before or after the collapses?

A. We saw the collapse.

Q. You weren't there?

A. We were at the tunnel on the Brooklyn side.

Q. And you saw tower 2 go?

A. We saw tower 1.

M. ZECHEWYTZ

Q. That was the second tower to go.

A. All right. No.

Q. The first tower to go was tower 2.

A. Okay. So that's the tower. We saw that from the Brooklyn side of the tunnel. I was right in front of the rig. It was me and Vinny Buonocore right in front of the rig. We were like the first thing out of our mouths after that was, "Wow, we have firemen just died." We saw it come down.

Then whatever Chief was there by the tunnel, they sent us and a couple other companies to the Brooklyn Bridge. Tower 1, then, I guess was still up. People were saying like, you know, it's crazy to give us the assignment to cross.

Then we went over the bridge. The tower was still up. That was tower 1, I guess, that was still up.

Q. The north tower.

A. I guess from that time, when we got over the bridge and where we parked our rig, it went down. But we didn't hear it. We just saw debris everywhere, but we didn't know that tower came down yet.

Q. Do you know who the Chief was that gave you the order to go back?

M. ZECHEWYTZ

A. No, I don't know. I remember his face. I mean, I could remember like it was yesterday. No, I don't remember.

Like I said, we parked the rig on I forget exactly what street and we went to the West Side Highway. We were there for a while. Then, I guess, after an hour or two, they sent us to the Millennium Hotel with roll-ups. We went to the fourth floor there, hooked up to a standpipe.

Then another Chief -- I don't want to say the wrong name. I'm not sure exactly who. It might be Jensen, if he was there with us. We went there with a truck company, another engine company. We were there for at least an hour, an hour and 15 minutes, and then they said that someone gave a Mayday in the hallway up the stairwell that the Millennium Hotel might come down. So we just ran out of there. We left our folds right on the stairs. We left the hose on the standpipe and all our stuff.

Q. That's about it?

A. Yes. After that we were pretty much just going from -- we were helping dump trucks, we were doing like little searches, engine searches, moving debris.

M. ZECHEWYTZ

Q. You said Roger was with you?

A. No. Vinny Buonocore, McLaughlin, John McLaughlin -- no, Jimmy McLaughlin. I'm sorry. Richie Vetland, Captain Henricksen. The only companies I remember with us at the staging area, I can remember 280 being there because I have a friend that was working that day. 102 truck was there. They walked through the tunnel. I knew a guy from there, Jimmy McCutcheon.

Q. Jimmy McCutcheon?

A. Yes. He actually walked through the tunnel.

Q. I hope he has a brother on the job. There's a Lieutenant in 122.

A. Oh, yeah?

Q. Yes. Somebody said they saw him there, Lieutenant McCutchan. Did you say 280?

A. 280 was with us at the staging area, 102 truck, 114 truck.

Q. 114 got through.

A. Yes, they got through. I don't know how they got through and we didn't.

Q. Because Dennis Oberg was standing next to me when the buildings came down.

A. Yes.

M. ZECHEWYTZ

Q. I know 114 got through.

A. Because I remember seeing them. We had pulled up. They went in front of us at the staging area and that was it. We didn't see them anymore. But we saw the tower come down from the tunnel, and then, like I said, the first tower, which is the second tower that went down, we didn't see come down. I saw it up all the way until we got over the bridge.

Q. Very good.

A. That's all. I wish I could help you a little more.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: No, that's fine. This concludes the interview at 1825.

File No. 9110243

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TROY OWENS

Interview Date: December 5, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 5th, 2001. The time is approximately 1705. I am Chief Art Lakiotes, Safety Command of the N.Y.C. Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER OWENS: Firefighter Troy Owens, Engine 279. That day I was working at Ladder 131.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: This is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Troy, if you would, just take me through your day during the event, after the event, where you went and so on and so forth.

A. We responded on the fifth alarm or whatever it was at the time, and we were told to report to the staging area on the Brooklyn side of the Battery Tunnel. We were standing there when we were watching one building burn. The second plane hit while we were standing there.

At that time we were deployed into Manhattan. We were stuck in the tunnel for a little while. We finally made it through. It was a disaster area, of course. Everything was

crazy. We took a position on the west side of West Street.

Q. If it will help you, here's a map.

A. I know exactly. We had to get right from underneath everything. There was too much shit coming down. We were standing on the other side of West Street. We were watching them jump and all of that there.

Then we received orders to proceed into building two via the World Trade Center Marriott Hotel. That's where we were. When we first arrived there, we didn't have any other specific orders. The lieutenant told us to take a minute, told us to take a breather.

We didn't have specific orders at the time. The first captain or lieutenant said, "Listen, guys, take your gear off. Take a breather, take a minute." What I chose to do is I went to say hello to someone I hadn't seen in a long time --

Q. Would you tell us who it was?

A. Yes. I went to say hello to Lieutenant Gregory McLetchie from Ladder 122. I saw another gentleman from proby school. I don't remember

his name.

Q. Do you know what unit he was with at the time?

A. Lieutenant --

Q. No, the one from proby school.

A. I don't remember what unit he was in.

Also I came back to the company and said, "Lou, I'm going to the bathroom." I went to drink water and wanted to urinate. I didn't want to get stuck up there and have to be thirsty. I went to the bathroom. As soon as I came back, they said, "Troy, we're ready." I saw we had our orders, to proceed to whatever staircase, whatever.

At that time I just had my bunker pants on. I put my bunker coat on. Right after I put my bunker coat on, I went to grab my mask. I noticed one of the guys from the company said, "Look, they're all running."

I heard rumbling. There was a window there. I looked outside. I saw a black quick shadow come to the building. I thought it was another plane hitting. I just heard rumbling, and everything just came down.

I just had to turn -- they said, "Get down, get down." I heard someone say get down, and that's what I did. I dropped. My helmet was buried. I couldn't get it. I had my hand on the strap to my mask. As everything was coming down, I was getting blasted by the dust, the debris. I was getting blown away, tossed around and whatnot.

I turned the mask on, and I tried to open it up and it wouldn't work. So I just stayed there until everything finally came down. I didn't get hit. I didn't get hit with anything, but I was choking on that shit.

So at the time I was like, wow, everything had gone black. I had my big light on. I've got my big flashlight on. After everything eventually came down and I was still alive, at that time I just wanted to know where was the way out.

There was a gentleman; I think he worked in the hotel. Maybe he was a fire safety director or something. I said, "Where was the way out?" He pointed in that direction. I went out towards the way out to look. The ground was

missing in some of the parts of -- in part of the lobby was like a bar area over there somewhere. It kind of went out a little bit.

At that point I said, okay, let me go see what's up with Ladder 131. I went back with 131. The first person I found was Lieutenant Woods. He was okay. He was okay. He was badly shaken up like I was.

The rest of the guys, we all came out. I think there was a door they were forcing to. Eventually we all got out. But I thought everybody was with us. Mattie Castrogiovanni, we didn't know where he was. From what I understand, somebody took him and put him in an ambulance and they took him away because his eyes got blasted pretty bad. We had communication with him at first, but then we lost him. So we didn't know where he was.

When we got out, we kept calling, kept calling. While we were trying to find out where he was, we helped pull this guy out from under an ambulance. I think lieutenant said pair up and help people. I paired up with Keith Kaiser.

We helped get this guy out from under

an ambulance. He was a fireman. I don't know who he was. Hopefully he's all right. The other guys helped this photographer.

What we did is we went across West Street. There was a store over there. I know we all needed to drink something or get the stuff out of our eyes. So we got into the store. The first thing I did was go straight to the back where the sink was. When I went there to cut the water on, they said, "The other building's coming down." The other building came down. All the guys that were there that were outside the deli, they dove in the deli. I dropped behind the counter. That's how we survived the second collapse.

After that the lieutenant said, "Look, we just survived two collapses. Let's get the fuck out of here." So we kind of got away from the area. At that time we -- during the second collapse, we kind of lost what's his name? Craig Gutkes? He got disconnected from us. We were still communicating with him.

So we went south a little bit. He met us there further down. There was another

building there, and I went inside this building to try to wash some of the stuff off my face and go to the bathroom. While I was in the building, I wanted to make a phone call also. While I was on the phone, they said you have to get out of the building because the building is going to blow, there's a gas leak.

At that time everybody in the vicinity, in that immediate vicinity, they made us all get on boats and they took us over to Jersey and that was it. We got on, me, Keith Kaiser and Mark Ruppert. We all got on together. We stayed together the whole time.

They took us to the decon units over by the triages over there. We tried to hook up with the lieutenant and Greg Gutkes was together. We tried to found out where they were. We spent a long time trying to find out where they were. We didn't want to go to any hospital until we knew where they were. Then eventually we found they were all right, because a gentleman from the house, Harry, he was helping us out, Harry (inaudible).

Q. (Inaudible.)

A. Yeah. He was helping us out. We knew everybody was okay. It was just Mattie, we didn't know what the hell was up with Mattie.

Eventually we wound up in the hospital. I forgot the name of the hospital.

Q. New Jersey? It's okay.

A. Actually the hospital was in I think Staten Island.

Q. That's what I'm saying, Staten Island, whatever. St. Vincent's or something like that.

A. I can't remember. They sent me a letter with the pictures that they took of us. They were real nice people. They took real good care of us. They washed out my eyes. My eyes got washed out three times. I still had a hard time. I was still choking on this stuff. My chest was burning and whatnot.

That was the end of it for us that day, for me.

Q. How many guys did you see in the lobby when you were in the lobby? 50? 60? 100? More?

A. There were a lot of guys going in with rollups. We were one of the last companies to go

in the building. I believe we were -- when we first walked in the Marriott World Trade Center Hotel, if I remember correctly, there's a bar that you ran into first.

Q. I think it's called the Tall Ships bar or something like that.

A. Okay. Then right after you get to the bar, then you actually reach the lobby, the hotel lobby. We were like the last ones, because I remember there was this wall.

When I found out the building was dropping, I dove right on this side of this wall. I tried to get close to something. Instead of being out in the open, I was kind of like hugging the wall. The other guys were right on the other side of the wall. There was a bunch of guys in there. The hallway, it was a long hallway, a long lobby.

From what I understand, everything behind that -- if you were behind the revolving doors, it would be curtains. From what I understand, everything behind the revolving doors -- I believe not even that far. I don't know how many people made it out. I don't think

it was too many. There were a lot of guys in the lobby. I can't really tell you a number because I know it was a deep lobby.

Q. What was that lieutenant's name from 122?

A. Lieutenant McLetchie.

Q. McLetchie?

A. Yeah, Lieutenant McLetchie, 122.

Q. So basically you were in the lobby close to the Liberty Street side.

A. Yeah. Actually they found my helmet.

Q. Did they?

A. The front piece only, just the front piece.

Q. You don't know what happened after tower one came down.

A. When tower one came down, we were on the other side --

Q. Yeah, I know. You left your helmet in the lobby of the hotel; right?

A. Yeah.

Q. That's what I'm saying. So we don't know what happened to the lobby after tower one came down.

A. The lobby itself?

Q. Yeah, after all the --

A. I have it up in my locker. The front piece, it's just the front piece of the helmet only, the leather part. It has a tag on it that says deceased.

Q. All right.

A. It said on Liberty Street.

Q. Very good.

A. It had a 9 on it, a 9. My badge number is the only one with Engine 279 on it because 279 is missing so maybe that's why they put "deceased" on it. I was working with 131.

Q. Okay. Sure. That's possible.

A. Mine was the only one from 279 that started with a 9, so it had to be mine.

Q. The guys from 279 didn't do too well.

So except for the lieutenant -- you really don't remember the name of the proby that you saw?

A. A Latin guy. I didn't see his name on the list of deceased. I would like to hear his story.

Q. What about his picture? I'm sure we

have it.

A. I talked to Lieutenant McLetchie. He said that he just grabbed a column and held on. What held him up is he was waiting for one of their men in the bathroom. That held them up. After everything came down, I remember him saying he was trying to cut a lieutenant out, some lieutenant.

Q. I'll get to talk to him.

A. Their tool failed, and they went on to get another one. When they went to get another tool, the other building came down. So that's what he told me. I thought he was missing, actually. I got his name mixed up with someone else. But he's okay. I talked to him on the phone. They were a little further in the building than we were.

Q. I guess that's it. I want to thank you.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: This concludes the interview. It is approximately 1725.

Thank you, Troy.

File No. 9110245

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL HAZEL

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

M. HAZEL

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 6, 2001. The time is 1625 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen King with the Safety Battalion of FDNY. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter Michael Hazel from Engine 224. The interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Mike, you can start any time you're ready.

A. Okay. That morning I was awaiting relief, believe it or not, and we were watching TV in the kitchen and we saw the news saying that the tower was hit, the first tower was hit.

So we had a couple of guys here. One guy was going off duty. The rest were all working. Another guy just came back from a detail. I said to them, "Don't go anywhere because we're going to be going to the World Trade Center," because we always respond to that box and you could see from the TV that it was a substantial fire and I knew we'd be going.

You couldn't tell at that point it was a jet. I thought originally it was a publicity stunt, especially after that guy with the parachute who got caught in the Statue of Liberty. I figured it was just some guy who was trying to fly between the towers and got lost because it really didn't look like that big of

M. HAZEL

a hole. So a few minutes later we responded. We were sent a ticket and we responded, but to the Battery Tunnel, to the staging area. We didn't go directly to the Trade Center.

On the way to the Battery Tunnel, we're driving along Columbia Street and I'm sitting across from the proby, and as we're talking and I'm preparing him for the events, what to expect at this job we're going to go to, he just says to me, "Look at this dummy. He's flying underneath the smoke instead of over it." With that I turned to my right and looked at the Twin Towers and I saw the second jet hit. So he started screaming and I just said to him, "We're in big trouble. This is an attack. We're being attacked."

So we thought we were going to get sent right to the Trade Center, but we went to the Battery Tunnel and, obviously, everybody else who was there saw the second plane hit, so no one was sitting in their rig just waiting to go. We all jumped out and ran over to each other and started talking, like this isn't good, we're in trouble here, there's a lot of fire, there's a lot of people, and we couldn't understand why we weren't getting called yet.

A couple of the chauffeurs who got out of

their rigs to mingle turned up their radios, so it was like in stereo. All the rigs just blared, "Anybody at the Battery Tunnel." They started rattling off the companies. "Respond." So we all wished each other luck and we jumped in our rigs and we went through the tunnel. We got stuck in the tunnel for a while, probably a good ten minutes, but it seemed like forever, where it just wasn't moving at all, and we pretty much all got the feeling that it was a setup, that we were meant to get stuck in there.

But we eventually got through the tunnel, and at first we started seeing bits and pieces, when we turned up West Street, of the plane and of what turned out to be body parts. But the closer we got, the bigger the parts got, the plane parts and the body parts, and it finally got to the point where I was facing forward and I told the proby, who was facing the rear, not to look anymore because I told him the things he was going to see he'd rather not see and that he would never be able to get it out of his head if he did see them.

At that point, Smitty was driving. That's when he started trying to snake his way up West Street. There was a lot of debris in the street and I

remember yelling to the Lieutenant to keep going because stuff was still landing all around us. We just passed a compact car where the engine was running and the door was open, which looked to me like the driver had escaped, but from the back seat to the trunk was crushed by a jet engine. I said to the proby, "There goes the luckiest guy in the world right there." So we went past that and we saw a couple of more gruesome scenes, and at that point I just made sure that we weren't going to pull over because it was just raining down too much debris.

We started going up West Street. I believe that's when Smitty ran over the part of the plane, but he did that to avoid the bodies because there were obviously bodies in the street that were hit by either apparatus or cars or something and it wasn't a pretty picture. Like Smitty said, it's just very hard to intentionally run over a body, even if you know they're dead. So we tried to go around them as best as possible. I didn't hear him hit the debris in the street. The guys on the other side said they heard it.

Anyway, we pulled up. We got a hydrant. We all jumped off and the Lieutenant reminded everybody to take their extra cylinder. I told the Lieutenant that

maybe we should help Smitty hook up because we'd probably need water more importantly than anything else. They had a lot of people there already. The hose I didn't think was going to be that important as much as water would be.

So we helped him hook up, and an officer came over from the command post. I thought it was a Chief. Somebody told me it was a Lieutenant. I'm not sure who it was. He told us to move. He said to get off the hydrant and move further up north to another hydrant so that rigs coming up from behind us would be able to form a chain rather than have them try to get around us because there wasn't much room to get through West Street. So we had to disconnect the rig.

We got back on the rig. We moved up to the next hydrant. Again we helped Smitty hook up and grabbed our roll-ups and our cylinders, and as we were turning to walk away, one of the guys just nonchalantly said, "Hey, Smitty, that's you," and he pointed to the ground. I didn't know what he meant. I looked down and it was transmission fluid. So I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "That's from when he hit the plane. We must have a leak." So I stopped him and I said, "We can't leave him here like this because, if

M. HAZEL

he runs out of transmission fluid, he's not going to be able to pump and he's going to be useless." So I said, "Let's see if we can help him."

So I called to one of the other guys, Richie Saulle, and I asked him to get the clay, the gunk that we use to fix gas tanks. I asked him to get it and see if he could go under there and try and patch this hole. So then we got the gunk and we went under the rig and it was a pinhole. It wasn't that much. We patched it up and we waited a while to see if it was going to stay. It looked like it was going to hold.

So we got out from under the rig and we got our roll-ups and our cylinders and we walked about maybe ten yards, 15 yards, and the tower started to come down. At first it looked to me like just the top of the tower, like maybe the top 15 floors, like the skin of the building was just peeling off and coming down. We pretty much all just stood there in disbelief, and what I did at that point was I told all the guys I was with to put their masks on, their face piece, because I saw the dust coming and I said, "Who knows how much we're going to get hit with? We might as well put our masks on." I told Smitty and this other guy, Bailey, who was just buffing the job, to get

M. HAZEL

their masks on or to hightail it.

So we all put our face pieces on and we pretty much got hit with a lot more than we expected, so we tried to find refuge behind cars or up against fences or whatever we could. I got down on the ground and a civilian -- I don't remember now if he bumped into me or if he just was calling out, but I grabbed him and I started sharing my face piece with him, sharing the mask, and then you just started hearing people screaming and yelling because they started getting engulfed in the cloud and it started getting darker and darker. Another guy was coming running by crying, screaming. I called out to him. He came over. The two of those guys were sharing my mask now. After a little while, a third guy starts coming up and he was screaming and we grabbed him, and then I had all three guys sharing my mask. So I was trying to calm them down because one guy was panicking. He was pretty upset. He was getting hysterical.

CHIEF KING: We're going to stop the tape for a minute. It's 1635 hours.

(Pause.)

CHIEF KING: It's 1636 hours. We're going to restart the tape. Go ahead, Mike.

M. HAZEL

A. So the one guy was getting pretty hysterical. The other two guys were okay. They pretty much took their hits of the air and they gave it back to me when I asked. But the third guy kept grabbing it and screaming and yelling. So I told him, I said, "Listen, you keep it up, I'm not going to give you any more and then you're going to pass out and I'm going to leave you here." So he pretty much calmed down after that. The bottom line is, I had my hood over my face, but they pretty much used up all my air. When it finally started to lift, the first guy who was pretty calm said thanks a lot and took off. The other two guys were a little more out of it.

We regrouped and tried to go a little up north to try and find a place where we could clear our eyes and throats and noses so we could breathe better. At that point I called out to all of the other guys in the company. I wanted to make sure that we didn't lose Smitty or Bailey because they didn't have any masks and I knew it got pretty nasty and, if they didn't run, they were going to need help.

So we couldn't find them originally. We got together, all of us regrouped, and we stood there for a while because we had heard reports now that the tower

came down and we didn't believe it. We just thought it was the top couple of floors. It was still too dusty and too dark to see. So we just stood there watching and waiting to see if it cleared and we could tell what was going on. At that point, on the radio, we heard a lot of Maydays and a lot of yelling and who's trapped and who's hurt.

It didn't seem like that long of a period of time, but by the time we regrouped and got our act together and we were going to start heading back down, that's when the second tower started coming down. When that tower started coming down, we knew from the first one, which, actually, the first collapse was blocked by the north tower from us. It sort of shielded us a little. When I looked up and I saw the antenna on the second tower coming straight, just like falling straight into the building, I knew it was coming down, and we pretty much just turned and started to run.

As we were running, it overtook us, the impact. A couple of guys went flying. We went diving under cars and up against fences. We started getting pelted with stuff. Nothing substantial, though. It turned pitch black. You couldn't see anything, but you could still hear the screaming again and the yelling.

Pretty much the radio went dead after that, the second tower. We didn't hear anybody screaming for help. It was just like an eerie silence. We knew that it was really bad.

At that point, I put my face piece on and my cylinder ran out. So I had the proby with me, who I had told to stick with me, and we ducked down behind a fence and I told him, I said, "Joe, you're going to have to remain calm here because you're going to have to change my cylinder." He said, "No problem," and he took my spare cylinder and changed it without a problem.

Then two guys behind us that were following the fence actually walked right into us and then a cop came by. I thought he was a transit cop. I'm not even sure now. We all stuck together and we started moving north up along the side of the fence because we still couldn't see anything. At that point, I think the four of us got together and we waited for it at least to clear up a little bit so we could see.

Most of the guys now were pretty bad as far as the dust and the breathing, and it seemed like a godsend. We were walking up West Street and a guy in a Poland Spring truck pulled over. I said to myself,

"I'm going to go over there and I'm going to grab some water. I don't care if this guy likes it or not." But we couldn't even blink. I told the guys to sit down, and as I ran over towards the truck, the guy got out of his truck and he just started opening up all the gates on the truck and started throwing us water. So we just took bottles and we started rinsing everybody's eyes out. By the time we got cleaned up, there were guys coming up by the hundreds, walking up the block and just needing to be rinsed and cleaned.

We got our act together. We regrouped and the Lieutenant and one of the other guys went down south again to see if we could find anybody left because at this point we didn't know what was going on and we wanted to see if we could find a command post or somebody down there that could tell us what to do. But we were northwest of the hotel and all the debris, it was like a roadblock. There was no way to get in there. That whole side of the West Side Highway was just pretty much just demolished. That's where the walkways were.

We went down there and there were numerous rigs burning, cars burning. It looked like something out of a war movie. There was really nothing to do. I

mean, all the rigs that were crushed and with all the debris in the street, we couldn't even get to the World Trade Center complex.

That was about it. That's pretty much it. After the second tower collapsed, we tried to get together and stick together. We found Smitty. We never found Bailey, but it turned out, we found out later on, that he ran up to 20 truck and made a few phone calls. But, unfortunately, when they asked where we were, he said he didn't know, that we were lost. So that didn't work out too well, except for the fact that at least the guys that were here knew not to tell anybody who called what he said. But that's about it.

The only thing I left out was, in between the two towers collapsing, there were a couple of firemen who were walking up that were bleeding pretty badly from the head, and we stopped them. They didn't want to stop. They were lost. They didn't know what they were doing. They were sort of out of it. So we had to like grab them and restrain them and hold them by the rig while we patched up their injuries on their heads.

An ambulance was coming down the block and I pulled them over and I said, "These two guys are hurt pretty bad. You've got to take them." They said, "All

right. We'll pull up and you can throw them in the back." I said, "Okay." So they drove to the back of the rig and I went behind the rig to grab these two guys and their heads were being bandaged by the proby and by Saulle, and the ambulance just took off. They kept going. So, when they kept going, I was like, you know, well, whatever. But anyway, they kept going, and that was only a few minutes before the second tower collapsed. So I don't know what became of them.

But most of the guys that were walking up the block after us were obviously closer to the building than us and they were injured. A lot of them were bleeding. Most of them were dazed and didn't even know where they were. That's why, when that water truck pulled over, that was really good because people couldn't breathe. The civilians didn't even realize, you know, when you can't breathe and when you've got dirt in your eyes, I guess, for some reason, we're a little more used to that than civilians are, but these civilians were panicking, and you know any time people are yelling and screaming and crying, it just adds more stress to the situation. So when this truck pulled over, we pulled out a couple of the five-gallon barrels of water, put them on like a ledge and just pulled the

M. HAZEL

cap off, and there were people sitting underneath them just like a shower and it helped a lot of people. That calmed them down a lot anyway.

CHIEF KING: Okay, Mike. Thank you. The time is 1645 hours and we've concluded the interview.

File No. 9110246

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS SMITH

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 6th, 2001. The time is 1355 hours. This is Battalion Chief Steven King of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, Firefighter Thomas Smith from Engine 224. This interview is regarding events which occurred on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Tom, you can start whenever you want.

A. My story starts with, in the morning sitting having coffee at the firehouse table. Somebody says, "Turn on Channel 1. A plane crashed into the Trade Center." The guys getting off the night tour, day tour, we had about seven to eight guys in the kitchen. The young guys were saying, "Look at that, look at that."

So my first thought was somebody flew a small Cessna or some plane and flew into the tower. We were sitting there, and the guys were like, "Wow." I said, "You know what, we may go on that," because us being so close to the Battery Tunnel and we went there in '93 to the towers.

Two minutes later, tones go off, "224 respond to Brooklyn Battery Tunnel at the staging area." The plane crashed at 8:48. We got that tone probably at about 5 to 9, 8:55.

So now there were guys hanging over from the night tour, and it was like, all right, ba-ba-ba, things were going on. Who's jumping on the rig? Who's the day tour? Who's taking the ride? PS, we start responding towards the Battery Tunnel.

En route to the tunnel, making a left out of quarters on Hicks, a left on Joralemon and another left on Furman heading towards the Battery Tunnel, there's a wide open view at the foot of Atlantic Avenue that shows the Manhattan skyline.

As I'm making the turn heading towards Columbia Street which leads into the tunnel, the proby on the right side of the rig yells out, "Another one hit the tower." I'm driving and I'm looking, I'm looking. I didn't see the crash, but I could see the flame, the orange.

Now we get to the tunnel. Now, the whole time we're not even thinking when we're

responding that it was a terrorist thing. En route to the tunnel, the second plane hitting, we meet at the tunnel. We were there with about six other companies. We're staging and, hey, how you doing, how you do, what's going on. Do you see what's going on? What are we going to do, blah, blah, blah.

With that they're trying to get Brooklyn-bound traffic out of the tunnel. It was chaotic at the toll plaza there. 224 and 210, we were on like a Rapelye Street, which is a side street leading into the tunnel. 101 was there already. Two or three other companies, this way, that way, at all different intersections leading into the toll plaza. Also we got word it had to be 9:08, 9:10 -- I'd say about 9:10, all right, let's go, respond to the towers. So we went through there, six or seven companies, I think it was; I'm not sure. If I see the ticket.

So we proceeded to go through, and it wasn't a straight run. We went and we had to stop because they had Port Authority guys in the tunnel, whatever. They still had cars inside. So it was go and stop. Cars would come along,

go, stop, which is normally a two- to three-minute ride through the tunnel. It seemed like 20 minutes we were in that tunnel.

Q. It was long?

A. It was long, probably about ten minutes.

If the second plane hit 9:06, we were at the staging area there probably about three minutes. So by the time we came out of the tunnel on the Manhattan side, it had to be 9:20, 9:25.

When we came out of the tunnel, I came out of the tunnel, went to West Street, made a right. There were rigs backed up, backed up. We proceeded up to the front of tower one where they had a lieutenant there. I don't have his name. The trucks were getting orders, and the engines were getting orders.

The trucks were just -- they were saying everybody get as far left as you can because they want a passageway for rigs to get in. Me being an engine, my officer got orders from the lieutenant in the street, "Tell your chauffeur get as far left as he can. There's

hydrants on West Street. Get a water supply. You're going to be relayed, you're going to feed," ba-ba-ba, the whole thing.

So we went as far left as we can, and there were rigs coming in, coming in all different angles and guys just coming up the rig. So I pulled up to my hydrant. My members get off, and we test the hydrant. We stretch our 35 foot yellow hose. We're hooked up to the hydrant.

One of the brothers in my firehouse turned to me and said, "Smitty, do you see that puddle of tranny fluid?" I said --

If I can go back a little bit. When we came out of the tunnel when we were heading on West Street, there was all debris in the street: airplane debris, building debris, body debris. So as we were going heading towards to get our orders at the tower, we were serpentining around body parts, airplane parts, building material. It was just chaotic.

So in the midst of me doing that, I hooked up to my hydrant, got my orders. My brother, one of the other firemen, noticed that I

punctured my trannie pan. We had a 5 by 5 circle of pink trannie fluid in the street, and I'm saying to myself as the ECC that I'm going to be fed, I'm going to be supplying, my rig cannot break down. Plus I had my back to the tower.

So I don't know what made me do it, but I repositioned my rig. I think it was Murray Street where all the rigs were when I got there. So there was an opening. I went a half a block, and there was a cross street. I think it was Murray. I turned my rig around, and faced the towers where I was looking at my pump panel and looking at the towers.

So this whole thing took maybe seven to ten minutes. Here it is probably a quarter to 10, 20 to 10. I'm trying to replay the time in my mind, but it's very foggy. It might be 2 minutes; it might have been 12 minutes. But we did the maneuver with the rig. I don't know what made me do it, but personally I just said -- the guys helped me out, we repositioned, came back around, hooked back up.

Me and another fireman proceeded to get our putty out that we putty for gas leaks and

everything on the highway. We took a piece of a chock. We chocked it up. The hole was probably a one by two hole. It was a nice gash.

Obviously I ran over some airplane debris, propeller or whatever, a rough edge, blunt edge, gouged my pan.

So anyway, we proceeded to plug it. It was a steady plug coming out. When we finished probably three to five minutes -- because the fluid was hot, so it was tough. We had to plug, step back, wipe off. We were getting it down our arms. PS, about five minutes we plugged it to a slow leak.

Our guys, who had their rollups and everything ready to go in, I would say, approximate now, I would say probably quarter to 10, 10 to 10, and our guys -- "Smitty, you okay? You all set?" "Yeah, I'm all set. I'm all hooked up. I'm all right."

This whole time we're watching people from probably 95 to 105 come out of the first tower, just coming every three to five seconds. There's another one, there's another one.

I'm taking deep breaths in the street.

I'm almost getting sick. All I had was a cup of coffee in me. I just couldn't believe what was going on. It was sickening. There were so many urgents and maydays and chaotic radio transmissions.

Another person coming out, a couple holding hands coming out, splashing on the ground. I could see them coming down three-quarters of the way, but we couldn't see the splash. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

Our guys are all set. They start moving in. I'm standing there in a golf shirt and shorts. The tower comes down. My guys just rolled up in a ball, ran, rolled up in a ball. They were all donned up in gear.

I, seeing this coming, ran and I had to jump over two parked cars. I ran two, three blocks, myself, EMS and other units that were still there in the street trying to get set. So I jumped over two parked cars. I ran two blocks. So two blocks after Murray, I'm not sure what street it is. But there were cars parked on the side, and I just bailed over these cars, rolled

up in a ball and just let the first cloud blow me over.

So after I regrouped, I hacked up a little bit more, because I had all that stuff in my throat, my eyes. EMS guys came over to me and gave me rinse for the eyes. I was taking water. I was a little disoriented, but I was fine.

The only thing I wanted to know is how my guys were, because I knew they were there. But me being in non-detective gear, I just did the 400 yard dash down West Street. I was a little shaken up.

So after I was tended to, eye rinse and washing out my throat, I proceeded to find my members, and we all embraced in the middle of West Street: Are you all right? Are you okay? Good, good.

One of the guys that was off duty, he was with me when we ran. He didn't have a mask, so he stayed with me. He never came back to the pack. So I ran another block to see if he was all right, couldn't find him, met up with the guys again. Everybody okay?

With that, guys that were on the outer

part of the collapse were coming out. I took out first aid stuff, put it on the back step of the rig. The rig was just whited out, glass taken out, just whited out everything, smoke, debris. I mean, just debris, dust.

So we took our medical EMS stuff out, put it on the back step. There were guys on the outer part of the debris, guys coming out with glass hanging out of their forehead, guys couldn't see, their eyes were caked, they couldn't breathe because they had no breathing apparatus on, they got caught up in the ball.

We were just tending to ourselves, making sure everybody was okay. What went on was just bullshit, uncontrollable, this is crazy. Okay, everybody's okay? You're regrouped. The officers, everybody all right, ba-ba. Let's make sure we know what we're doing here. "Smitty, are you okay?" "Yeah."

I went to the rig. They proceeded to head towards the tower again. The second tower comes down. I still have no protection. I'm still whited out. The second tower, the cloud of debris was twice as big as the initial one. I

knew I did this dash before. I knew I ain't going to die in West Street this way.

I knew there were brothers in there after the first one. I'm not even thinking about how I'm doing. I just know that there's casualties, not only civilians from jumping; I know there's 45 minutes of respond time worth of brothers in there.

PS, the second tower comes down. Every man for himself. I did another 400 yard dash down. There were so many people coming out of the scene already, I couldn't get to where I went to the last time, so I ended up running towards Stuyvesant High School. There were people running in there, so I could see them from a distance. So that's why I made a straight line, made a left-angled turn, headed towards the outside lobby of Stuyvesant.

As I was going there, the cloud was on the back of my head. I could feel it. I just lunged to the door. As I was lunging, a guy opened it up and I darted inside. They tended to me.

I was not shaken up, not upset. I was

out of sorts, out of sync. I didn't know what to anticipate was going on, what can we do. There was no radio transmission. I had an empty feeling in my stomach.

Then I go back to see where my guys are again, because I'm fine. I knew my guys -- they had all their gear on. They weren't going to run as fast as I was. So we went back there and made sure everybody was okay. There was more crazy stuff in the street. There was bleeding civilians coming out. It was hysteria in the street.

I went to my guys. Everything was okay. "Smitty, are you all right?" We're hugging, kissing, making sure we're all here. All of a sudden I hear on the radio transmission, "Okay, 224 start water." I'm saying I'm 224. My officer is right there. I said, "Lou."

Anyway, to make a long story short, when I repositioned my rig, I was the only rig facing the towers. Everybody who was coming in from Brooklyn from the Battery Tunnel were facing going down West Street. I was facing the towers. So they obviously moved my rig, repositioned my

rig from West and Murray to two, two and a half blocks up right on West -- on Vesey right up at West, and they started to relay from marine unit to 57 Engine, 84 Engine, feeding me. I was feeding 33 Engine, who was feeding the manifold.

I went back to my rig it had to be five minutes after the second tower came down, and I pumped from about 11:00 a.m. until quarter to 11 that night. My captain finally came on the scene probably about 12:00, and he took charge and made sure the guys were okay. I stayed with my rig until about 10:30, 11:00, quarter to 11 at night.

They backed me off the rig because seven was in dead jeopardy, so they backed everybody off and moved us to the rear end of Vesey Street. We just stood there for a half hour, 40 minutes, because seven was in imminent collapse and finally did come down. Then we proceeded to pump another six hours.

I was told to go back to the firehouse, jump on the first bus out of there. Relaxed, because to my group -- I was on a mutual that day anyway. I was working for somebody. I wasn't even supposed to work. My group was due in

tomorrow morning at 0900. They wanted me here.

So the captain picked a few guys, they had to stay. The guys that were here all this morning, whatever, you guys go home. So instead of staying in the firehouse, I told him I'm going to go home.

In the midst of all this, I called my wife and let her know I was fine, called my mother and all the family, because it was a little -- I knew my wife would be a basket case, because she knows I was there in '93. My one son is up in college at Marist. He knew I was there in '93. He knows I'm five minutes away from the tunnel. They're watching it on TV. I wanted to make sure that everybody knew I was all right.

My wife said, "I saw Tommy on TV." They saw me fleeing from the scene. So I went home that night. I was shaken up. I was fine on the way home -- when we came back to the firehouse a little after 11:00, that was the first time I saw the actual footage on TV. We stayed there for an hour and a half, and we talked with the brothers.

Then I proceeded to drive home. I was

fine. A block away from my house, knowing my wife and my three other kids were waiting for me, I just lost it. I watched it on TV for another three hours with my wife and kids and couldn't sleep, woke up about 7, was here by 8:00, and I went up there for the 12th and we did our part digging, digging, digging.

We all came back, but unfortunately the guys that we met outside the Battery Tunnel that morning, the six or seven companies that were there -- 118 went over the Brooklyn Bridge. So let me remember this. 101 was there. 226 was there. 279 was there. 35, 38 guys, I don't know how many extras that were on each rig. 19 or 20 of them didn't come back.

I'm just glad to be here. I don't know if it's a guilt complex thing, but I'll never forget. It was the most traumatic day in my life. I said it ten times in the street, I've got 18 and a half years on the job. I've got three sons. They all want to come on the job. I said it ten times in the street that day, I said, "This is it. I'll fight fires until I'm 65 years old, but I can't control it. This is bullshit."

But I was just concerned about guys that I knew that were unaccounted for. Then the twelve we met at 211. We went over there. I had to go on the bus. They had the list of the unaccounted members. That's just a tough nut to swallow.

That's my take on that whole morning from 9:05 to 10:55. I was at the scene -- I was back there 0900 the next morning. We did 24 on, 24 off. I went there in between a few tours.

I'm just coming back, just took a vacation, just came back from my vacation. I came back and I had what they called the WTC cough. I've been coughing since. Some shit nights sleeping. I'm just happy to be here, Chief.

Q. Thanks, Smitty.

CHIEF KING: The time is 1615 hours, and this interview is complete. Thank you.

File No. 9110247

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD SAULLE

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 6th, 2001. The time is 1735 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen J. King from Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Richard Saulle from Engine Company 224 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Richard, you can start whenever you want.

A. To start off with, I was in the shower, because I have this fetish about taking a shower before every shift. No matter if it's the first half or the second half of the 24, I always take a shower. So unfortunately I was caught in the shower.

The run came in. Somebody came running up and said a plane just hit the tower. I said, "What are you talking about?" I thought they were trying to get me out of the shower, maybe flour me or do something hilarious like they normally do, or somebody will turn the water off. So here I am, I jump in my shorts, just a regular work shirt and a pair of shoes, no socks, no drawers. Here I go, I'm down.

The tones went off, responded. The first response was to respond to the World Trade Center. Then the second one came in as we were driving out of quarters to report to Rapelye Street at the base of the Battery Tunnel. That was the second one that came in.

So we sat there and waited. I believe we must have waited there until they were clearing the tunnel out. That was just my logic. There were cars coming in there. They shut it down, cleared the tunnel out. We were getting ready to go through as a convoy with the rest of the fire engines and fire trucks going through there.

I was on the chauffeur side of the rig, back of the chauffeur, like I normally sit when I ride in the back, unless I have the pipe. A young kid, Joe Sullivan, said, "Why is this plane flying through the smoke? Holy shit, he hit the second tower." I said, "Get the hell out of here." I stuck my head out the window, and I looked up and I was amazed what I saw. Both towers were on fire, and I said we're in a lot of trouble.

So we started going through the tunnel, and I said we're in a lot of trouble. They're coming with more planes. This is terrorism. My brain started -- I'm not the sharpest tool in the shed. Guys will tell you I say that about myself all the time. I said, they're coming, they're going to hit the tunnels, they're going to hit the bridges.

So my mind told me to say good-bye to everybody. So I reached across and I said to Hazel, "Good-bye, Mike, it's been nice working with you for 16 years." "Joe Sullivan, I'm sorry you're only on the job a couple of months."

I told Bradbury, who was sitting opposite me, "Kevin, I know we don't like one another very much," because me and him are always bickering, but we still like each other. That was just our way, we always fight with each other. I said, "Goodbye, Kev." Then I hit Smitty in the back of the head and I said, "Smitty, you still owe me \$15. When we get up to heaven, you better pay me."

This kid, Stu Bailey, was in the middle of the officer and the chauffeur in the front,

and I told him the same thing. I said, "You owe me \$5 if you remember too." Then Desimone, I said, "Desimone, I'll see you at the big one."

Then we proceeded. We got through the tunnel. What we saw on the floor was amazing. There were plane parts, cars wrecked, body parts. It looked like Tales of the Crypt. There were arms sticking up in the air, and bodies were just shredded all over the place.

There was a car that we drove by that the driver's door and the passenger door were open, and there was a plane motor on the back half of the car. Two inches more, and both these guys would have been dead too. That was their ticket. It was amazing. The car was actually cut right in half with this motor, right there back of the front seat. I sat there in amazement.

Then we drove. Smitty is very aggressive, just like I am when I drive. We kind of hit a couple of bumps when we went over. I don't know what it was. But we got to a point in front of the two buildings. We looked up, and the flames were coming and the bodies were coming

down and splattering on the street like watermelons.

Chief told us to supply an engine company in front of the building, find a hydrant. We started rolling up, and as we rolled up Kevin says, "Hey, we have a transmission leak." There was a puddle about two feet around of transmission fluid.

So we got to the spot, which was probably another 50 feet up. The first hydrant that we saw that was open, squeezing through all kinds of fire trucks that were angled all over the place. It was just the way everybody just parks and just gets out and runs.

So I climbed under the rig, and there was a little cut, about an inch cut, with a little drip hole coming out from the transmission. I need a chock. I said, "I need a chock. Do we have a chock?" I started jamming. The chock was too big.

So I actually started gnawing at it with my teeth. I made like a miniature size toothpick out of this, and I jammed it in there. It still was dripping. I had to put the goop on

there, and it worked pretty well.

As I did that, that's when the first tower fell. As soon as I finished, got up, the tower came down. We heard somebody saying, "Sh." That's how the tower sounded coming down, "Shhhhhh." That's all you heard it, a big shush. The tower came down.

Hazel said to me, "It's going to get awfully dark in a minute," and that's exactly what it did. It just wiped us out. Nobody had masks on. People were running at us, knocking us over. It got black. You thought it was night. It was like night for five minutes.

The first thing that came to mind is, we all had masks on and everything, but we didn't don them. It didn't dawn on us until after the fact. We must have donned them a minute after this building came down and after the blackness hit us, because we didn't have time between people running you over and worrying about Joe Sullivan, make sure the proby was next to us, and Bailey, who had nothing but shorts on. He had dress shorts on.

After the first building came down and

it finally cleared, it was like somebody blew pillows up. It was just dust in the air, totally dust. A couple of guys came walking out of the pile, truckies, because they had their tools with them.

One guy had an ax, one guy had a halogen, and they were actually throwing their halogen and axes on the floor in frustration and pissed off. Maybe somebody they knew got wiped out in front of them, maybe what they saw. One of them looked like he was scalped because the whole back of his head was opened up.

So we grabbed the EMS bag and we started bandaging his head, we washed him out. We actually washed his head out with booster water, which was rusty. The rig wasn't hooked up to a hydrant yet, and that's all we had, whatever we had, the 500 gallons in the tank.

We started washing his head off because the stuff was like glue. It was stuck to him. It didn't come off by just washing it. You had to rub and wash. So we washed the back of his head off, and this guy was so -- he was cursing up a storm. He was worried about what happened

to him. He didn't even realize that the whole back of his head was ripped open.

So we were bandaging two guys heads, and then I guess it must have been a worker came out of the building. He had just a white shirt on. He was covered. When he opened up his eyes, it looked like the Little Rascals in the film when the guy got covered in stuff and you just saw the whites of his eyes. He was black. He couldn't see. So we proceeded to wash him and rub him down.

Geez, about a couple of minutes after that, here come the second tower on us. The first tower was in the way of the second tower. When the first tower came down, the second tower was blocking it in our hitting range. I figured this tower is definitely going to get us, because now we were closer, and there was no building to block it. I thought this is it, we're getting wiped out again.

We ran down the street. We must have gained 30 yards, 30 yards at most, and it was like you were running as fast as you can and somebody shoved you in the back of the head and

you went head over heels tumbling, because the force of the wind was incredible. It knocked you over.

There was a guy actually on his hands and knees begging to me, "I have no mask. Don't leave me here. I don't want to die." I slapped this guy -- I don't know, he's from an engine company, because he had a black face piece. I slapped him and I said, "It's dust, stupid. It's dust. You're not going to die. Relax."

Then when the lieutenant heard me yelling at the guy and hitting him, he came crawling over and he said, "I have no mask." I said, "Listen, we're going to buddy share this mask. If you try and take it away, I swear to God I'll knock you on your ass," just like that. I said, "It's dust. Go like this. That's all you have to do. Put your coat over your mouth." These guys, they lost it, totally lost it.

The second tower came down. The same thing, blackness for longer this time. It was ten minutes now. Finally the dust cleared, and it was like panic. People were running. The whole street was running at us.

The chief was telling us, "I want everybody 300 feet back," because we didn't know if any other buildings, from the shock, or undermining or anything else if they were going to weaken any other buildings. He said, "I want everybody 300 feet down."

We walked all the way down. There was a couple of fire hydrants that were open. There were thousands of people giving us bottles of water. It was amazing. It was like a candy store in the street: water, drinks, this, that. Within minutes everybody was getting it. Trucks were there with food.

I jumped in a puddle because there was a fire hydrant running, and I washed this stuff off me, because, like I said, it was glue. I washed my helmet in the water. I had it all down my neck. I was breaking it, and everything, because it was gagging you.

After that it just ended right there for a while. It was like stagnant for a while. Then finally we heard the total recall. We heard the radio, we tried to listen to radio stations. Then everybody had radios around us. They hit

this, they hit that, they hit this.

It was like oh, my God, we're in the middle of like a world war over here. They're hitting everything. I said they're going to hit more. I thought they were going to hit another building by us, because there were a couple buildings -- as we walked down West Street, there was a couple of big buildings that we were getting to.

I said, "Listen, they're going to start hitting this because this is the next tallest building. I said this is no good either. You're better off staying right here." In between this tall building, in between the towers, this is a regular low area. I said you're better off saying over here, and we did. We kind of like shacked up on the curb. It amazed me.

(Interruption.)

A. So now we're just sitting there it seemed like an hour, an hour and a half goes by, and we said what the hell are we doing? So we started walking back towards what I guess they gave it the name now ground zero. They might have given it the next day or whatever.

We were walking back towards that. Guys were just sprawled out all over the place. Who was there, who has a bandage on their head, who was just sitting there with their mouth open. It was terrible. It was terrible. You knew guys were dead. You knew guys were really dead.

It was hours, it must have been. We were trying to find the rest of the guys, because the recall was there. So we started walking -- you're walking in this stuff, and it was just like powder. So we were walking and breathing this shit all day long. It was like an inch thick. No matter where you looked, everywhere, blocks away, it was an inch thick. We're walking in this rubble, and nobody has a mask on. It only lasts for 17 minutes.

We walked down Vesey all the way around -- we actually found where the rig was, where Smitty was actually pumping water. He was pumping water for a few hours. Before that we packed up into a hotel, and they said there were some sandwiches up on one of the upper floors. So we ran to get a sandwich and thought of Smitty. We came around and gave him half a

sandwich.

Then it creeped up until it must have been 2:00 in the morning they were ordering guys. They took a head count. Everybody had to report in. There were a few guys that were missing, but we got a head count of our whole company. Then they said, "Anybody on the day shift, you have to go home. You're ordered to go home." I said, "I'm not going home. I'm staying with my rig. I'm here. I'm not going anywhere."

Our captain was there, Captain Quinn, at that time. Now he's a chief. A few days later after that they made him a chief, the next rank up. He ordered us to go home. I said, "I'm not going home." He said, "I'm telling you, go, that's it. You've had enough. Go home. See you tomorrow." He said there's buses on West Street.

I walked for three miles on West Street. We didn't see a bus at all. There was like seven of us that were walking back. This guy Pacheco, who was one of the recall guys, he had an interview with I guess a Puerto Rican station. So they wanted him to talk a little Puerto Rican, and he started talking, and the

rest of the guys filtered up. They must have jumped on the bus, and we missed the bus.

So me, Smith and Pacheco were left behind. We walked for three miles on West Street until we found nothing. There was a Con Edison crew there that we actually begged them, "Do us a favor. We just want to go home. We're tired." It's now 3:00 in the morning. We're exhausted. We want to go home.

One of the guys said, "I'll take them home. I'll take them. Where are you?" I said, "We're right over the Brooklyn Bridge, right there on Hicks Street." "That's no problem, but you have to get deconned first." Ai-yie-yie.

So here we are, stripped naked as a jaybird. We had to get washed down with ice-cold water from the fire hydrant. They gave us these coveralls. They put all our stuff in red bags, double taped them, gave us all the stuff.

Normally when something like this happens, they say usually you take everything that's on you. I had the commissary money on me. I had \$600 in my right pocket. I said they're not getting that. I ripped open the kneecaps,

the pads in the bunker pants, and I stuck it in there. I said they're not getting the money. I closed it back up. So I had the \$600 on my right knee just about from 3:00 in the morning on. I said, "Sh, they're going to confiscate all our money. I put all my money in the kneecap."

They dropped us off and wound up giving us back our bags. So the first thing I did is I ripped my bag open and let all this air and shit out in the firehouse. The whole firehouse was white from everybody else coming in with their bags.

I didn't even go home. I just went upstairs and went to bed, I was so exhausted. The only thing is my wife was trying to get in touch with me the whole day. She didn't know. A couple of guys told her, "I don't know. I don't know where he is. I don't know." So she was kind of on pins and needles all day.

I woke up about 9:00 in the morning, 9:30. My eyes usually open up at 6:00. I was so overexhausted that I got three extra hours in there.

When I got home, I collapsed on the

floor like a baby -- I have to say that -- right on the floor. I don't know why I did it, but my legs just gave out from under me as soon as I walked in my door. My wife and my kid was home, and my puppy. I just got a dog.

The only thing I wanted was to kiss that dog, kiss my wife. All four of us were on the floor. My dog was ballistic because he was licking the three us. He was licking us up, going from person to person and licking us up. It was amazing. It was amazing.

My legs buckled. They never did that before. Actually they probably buckled one other time. When I had my first son in the hospital, I got the jitters. But other than that, I usually hold everything. You know, I cry at funerals. That's me. I'm a little weak. But the weak legs, I usually never have them.

That's my story.

CHIEF KING: The time is 1755 hours,
and we're concluding the interview.

File No. 9110248

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STUART BAILEY

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

S. BAILEY

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 6, 2001. The time is 1715 hours and this is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Stuart Bailey from Engine Co. 224, and this interview is concerning the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Stuart, you can start the interview. Just tell me what position you had that day.

A. I actually didn't have a position that day. I was one of the guys that took the run-in being off duty.

Q. Okay. Tell us your story of what you saw that day.

A. I worked that night in Ladder 101, the night before, and got relieved there around 8:20, came here, got in the house around 8:30. We responded shortly after that on the first plane, took the run-in, jumped on a rig with another kid, Joe Sullivan, a proby. We both took the run-in, both were off duty.

We got to the staging area by the Battery Tunnel. Before we were going into the tunnel, we were pretty much just watching it, just watching the first plane. I believe the second plane hit as we were going into the tunnel, or possibly as we were going to the

S. BAILEY

staging area, the second plane wound up hitting.

At that time we realized -- the kid in the back, the proby, said it was a terrorist attack. No one even realized what actually was going on. We just thought this plane accidentally hit, until that second plane hit, then we realized what was actually happening.

Maybe ten minutes after being at the staging area, they started moving the rigs into the tunnel. As we were going into the tunnel, one of the kids that was actually walking with his gear -- I can't even recall his name, but there's a big article. The guys know his name -- actually asked Tommy Smith, who was the chauffeur, if he could jump on the back of the rig. I didn't even realize that he jumped on, neither did Tommy or anyone else, until maybe later on, then we realized the kid actually did jump on the rig. I believe he was lost. He was missing.

When we pulled out of the tunnel, the way I saw it, they couldn't keep us really right there by the tunnel. We had to proceed past the building because of all the rigs that were behind us. I guess it would have delayed them from getting in. We would have been backing up the tunnel pretty much. So they kind of had

S. BAILEY

everything blocked off and we kind of swerved around debris from the plane, body parts pretty much everywhere. That's the first time I've ever seen anything like that. I'm sure no one did.

Then I believe we went to get a hydrant. We had a pretty close hydrant to the Trade Center itself, pretty much almost right out in front, and a Lieutenant started screaming at Tommy Smith that he wanted the rig moved. He wanted to stand out front, I guess, to relay water or to help out with that, getting water over there. So that guy actually moved Tommy from pretty much in front of the Trade Center to a little bit further where we wound up being on Vesey and West Street, over there.

At that time both buildings were going, both planes had already hit the building, and we were just standing there. I looked up, realized the transmission, our transmission, from riding over the rubble that was on the ground, the remains of the plane, ruptured our transmission tank, so transmission fluid was leaking. Tommy noticed that. So we kind of spent an extra five minutes or so kind of trying to plug that in. I guess the guys rendered it useless at that time, it would have been useless if we didn't do

S. BAILEY

that, you know, just another story out there of how you get saved. But the guys got off their gear.

Guys all had their gear. I didn't have any gear on me. I didn't realize. I was just going in for the ride. I thought it was just a regular fire, a little bit bigger than regular. But as we're standing there, the guys had all their tanks on. I didn't have anything. Tommy didn't have anything. So we were kind of like maybe even a step back from everyone else, realizing what's happening, jumpers. You didn't realize, until you actually looked and saw arms and legs waving, exactly what was happening, you know, one after another. There must have been three or four dozen that jumped out right there while we were standing there, just in amazement, exactly what actually was happening.

Then all of a sudden, the further tower, the south tower, I think it is, the first one that went down, the south tower went down. We really didn't realize that it was actually the whole building going down. It looked like just maybe a side or something because you couldn't really see because the other one was in the way, and then you realized exactly what happened because, as you saw on the TV, all the smoke,

S. BAILEY

that pretty much came up ten stories high, 15 stories high, pretty much just came right at us.

Asses and elbows, you know, we just started running every which way. I think I might have actually ran a little bit further than everyone else being I had no gear on me or anything like that. I couldn't take a knee and just let everything blow over me. So I was kind of out in the front. I might have even ran an extra block or two before I turned around and just realized there was nobody even with me.

I would say it was 15, 20, 25 minutes before that cloud kind of dissipated even a little bit. I started working my way back slow, relaxing, just taking it easy, realizing what's happening. I would say about a half a block away from there, I came back with my company again, not even knowing what happened to them because they weren't even near me, the second one came down. I ran again. It might have even been another block I ran.

At that time jets were coming over your head and you didn't know what was happening. Is that our guys? It didn't even dawn on me that it was our guys. It was just this happened here, big buildings are all around, they're still hitting us.

S. BAILEY

It must have been another half an hour until I kind of got on my feet and just was like, okay, let me start working my way back. At that time guys from other companies were kind of there also, so I wound up hooking up with some kids from different companies. A kid from 20 Truck was there, a Lieutenant from 34, Lieutenant Winkler was there. I hooked up with them and I actually wound up not even seeing my company until maybe 11:00 o'clock that night, you know, working without anything. I wound up getting gear later on. Maybe a couple hours later I was able to get gear on the side, no bunker coat, no helmet, just pants.

I just pretty much worked through the whole night. I wound up finding out that they were actually alive from one of the guys from 202 that was actually on our side. Somehow or another I wound up being on the other side of the building. I wasn't even on the side where we were. I wound up being on the other side. I saw a kid from 202 and he showed me a way how to get to the other side to where 224 was. He let me know that the guys were okay. That was at 11:00 o'clock at night maybe I hooked up with them.

Then we went back to the house by bus like 1:30 in the morning, you know, finally taking the bus

S. BAILEY

in. That's pretty much it. I went back to work the next day.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Okay. Thank you, Stuart. The time is 1723 hours and I'm concluding the interview with Firefighter Bailey.

File No. 9110249

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DOMINICK MUSCHELLO

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 6th, 2001. The time is 1831 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Dominick Muschello from Ladder Company 119. This interview is concerning the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Dominick, you can start any time you want.

A. I worked the 6 by 9 tour the day before and the day of September 11th. We saw the smoke when the first plane hit the towers from headquarters here because we have a clear view to the World Trade Center, but it was obstructed by the factory across the street from the first floor. So we went up to the third floor to see what it was, and we noticed that it was the World Trade Center.

At that point we flipped the TV on in the gym, which is on the third floor. There's a TV up there. We were watching the news, and they said a plane had hit. Plus a marshal had come in. The marshals are also in the building. He

said he got on his pager that a plane had hit the tower and it wasn't just a bomb or a fire.

As we watched the fire from the third floor, we saw the second plane fly right into the center of the building clear as day, because there were about two or three of us up in the gym at that point.

I kind of thought we were going to go before that happened. But once the second plane hit, I knew we were going over there and then you knew that it wasn't any type of an accident, two planes, a terrorist. Then you started thinking it was going to be a long day. A lot of people definitely got hurt over there that day.

We got the alarm I think our ticket said 9:08. We were actually first due on the ticket to the second tower, out right first due on the first alarm.

So going over, looking at the towers as we were starting to go over the bridge -- I'm not the chauffeur, so I don't know what bridge we went over, but I believe it was the Brooklyn Bridge. I just remember saying to myself I hope they don't blow this bridge up on the way over,

because I had a real bad feeling I wasn't going to come home that day. By the way everything looked, I had a feeling it was going to be a bad day.

When we got to the Trade Center, we had a hard time getting close because of all the debris that was falling from the building. So we parked I believe, near the corner of Church and Dey near that old church there, along that street with the wrought iron railing.

I remember walking down there. We were going to make a left and head down towards Liberty because we were first due to the second tower. We were going to go down Church to Liberty, but there was too much debris falling. So we made a right, and we went down Vesey or one of those streets, whatever streets goes over to the West Side Highway, around tower one.

As we were walking up, the jumpers were jumping clear as day, hitting the street and the marquis from tower one right in front of us on the West Side Highway there. That was a very disturbing sight.

There was the walkway that goes across

right there that's no longer there, that walkway that goes across the West Side Highway. When we reached that walkway, we stopped for a second because there were so many people jumping we were afraid of getting hit by jumpers.

We walked across the street underneath that walkway, and at that point when we got across the street, that's where there was a command post set up, just maybe 100 feet south of that walkway on the northwest side of the West Side Highway. That's where the command post had been moved to, which we did not know at that point. We were going in to the lobby to the command post.

When we got to that command post, the chief, which I don't remember who it was, but I do remember seeing Chief Nigro there. I don't know if he was there when we got there or if he got there after us. Chief Ganci was down the road just another 30 feet or so. We were told to stay at that command center. It looked like there were about four or five other companies there.

While standing on the sidewalk, I

looked up at the tower and I said to the captain, "Captain, this is not a good place to stand." I said, "If this building comes down, we have nowhere to run." He said that's a good idea.

We moved in front of this garage door. That luckily was open. We stood in front of the garage door. It was a basement-entering garage, a garage ramp, underground garage door there. I think it was Two World Financial Center building or one of the buildings there. We stood up on the sidewalk but knew that we had the garage to run into if anything happened.

We were kind of wondering why we were still standing there. I kept asking the captain, "Captain, what's going on? Let's go in the building." He said that there was a mayday given for a company -- I don't remember which company. I'm sure he'll have that information.

The command post chief told us, or the lieutenant or the captain at the command post told us we're getting a so-called rescue team together. We're putting together three engines, two trucks, and we're going in for the company that's giving the mayday. I believe we had three

engines and one truck and we were just waiting for the second truck to come.

All of a sudden it felt like a train was pulling in, and the second tower came down. I only looked at that tower for a split second or two and knew it was time to run. Everybody ran into the garage. Upon running into the garage, there were people in front of me and there were people in back of me. You couldn't see anywhere. It was running into darkness.

I hid behind a pillar. I didn't know there was a way out. I wasn't thinking there was a way out. It was definitely every man for himself. There wasn't one person looking out for anybody else, which is understandable.

I didn't realize there was a rear door. There was a staircase that went up to -- and they were able to get out of the rear. I wasn't thinking that fast. I wasn't following the guys running in deep, deep, deep into this garage. I went in about 40 feet and dove behind a column. I didn't figure I had much more time than that.

I kneeled in the corner of this column and put my mask on, my face piece on, and took

the respirator part out and got ready. I didn't want to use any air, and I didn't know what was going to happen at that point, if it was going to fill up with fire or what-have-you. So I didn't want to start using air.

I put my jacket over my head. I took my jacket off and put it over me kind of, not took it off but loosened it and put my hood and everything, just tried to cover as much as I could. I crawled into the corner.

A couple of other people got on top of me, and all of a sudden debris and stuff started falling in front of the garage and falling into the garage and the cloud of smoke and dust came in.

Then all of a sudden when it seemed safe and there was no more noise, I got up. There wasn't really anybody else around me anymore. I guess the guys that were on me had left. They didn't feel safe or whatever the story was.

So my first reaction was to head back out instead of going deeper into the garage, because I knew 40 feet up along the right wall,

which is where I was, going in to the left but right on the way out, I would be able to get to the sidewalk again.

I couldn't see. I took my face piece off at that point because I knew it was just smoke. I reattached it to the respirator and just pulled my hood over my mouth and nose, just tried to breathe through that, because you really couldn't breathe at all. It was so thick that you spit it out. You coughed it and spit it right out. It filled your mouth up. Your nose got clogged instantly, you couldn't breathe anymore through your nose.

I made my way up to the sidewalk, and there was nobody there. There was one or two people around. You couldn't see very far. It was very, very quiet. There wasn't even any sound. I didn't have a radio.

I remember seeing Chief Nigro kneeling on the ground. It looked like he was saying a prayer. He had just his helmet on and his white shirt, no bunker gear. I tapped him on the shoulder, and I said, "Chief, are you all right?" He just looked up to me. I said to myself I know

he's not hurt. So I looked around to see if there was anybody else that I could help.

This whole time I'm thinking that all the guys that ran into this garage were going to come back out the way I was. I didn't think they had found their way out the back door. So I was kind of hanging on the sidewalk and heading across the street, hitting the middle of the street, looking around.

There was a lot of rubble, a lot of debris around. I was looking for people to help, because I knew where the garage was. You could actually follow your footprints back. It was like snow. There was no problem seeing where you came from.

A firefighter came across the street at that point. He didn't have any bunker gear on; or he may have had bunker pants, but he didn't have a coat or helmet or anything. I don't know who he was. It looked to me like his fingers may have gotten cut off or something, but he was bleeding really, really bad. He was bleeding real, real bad. He was bleeding all over me.

I actually yanked my T-shirt off that

was under my shirt, and I wrapped his hand. I brought him into the garage, because I wanted to get him off the sidewalk because there was still stuff that was falling. I don't know whether it was coming from the first tower now, because we were actually closer to the first tower, or if it was stuff from the building, maybe glass. There was still stuff falling down.

I went into the garage, and at that point I met up with somebody that had stretched a search rope. I didn't see who that was. All of a sudden he said this search rope leads out to the rear.

So I walked the guy that was hurt along the search rope, and I said, "Follow the search rope and you'll be able to get out through the rear," because there were guys that were coming. I said, "Somebody help him."

But he went into a closet and sat down and said, "I can't walk anymore." I said, "You can't sit in this closet. No one is going to find you." So I helped him back onto the search rope and started following the search rope. I myself didn't know where it went. I didn't

follow it yet.

At that point a guy came who had a white windbreaker on, I believe it was. It might have been like retirees or a union or a chief association, but I don't know who he was. It was civilian clothes with some type of a white windbreaker on, an older fellow with gray hair.

I handed him this guy that was bleeding off to him. As I told him take this guy to the rear, I'm going to see if I can help anybody else, we heard a tapping noise. I stopped. I said, "Do you hear that?" He said, "Yeah, I do." I said, "It sounds like it's coming from over there." The guy said, "Yeah."

We started stretching the search rope over to the noise, and then it wouldn't go anymore. I told the guy, "You take the guy to the rear, and I'll be able to find my way back to the search rope."

I followed the noise, the tapping noise. It was an OEM guy. His name was Powell, I believe, or something like that, a big black guy, Calvin or something. I don't remember. I remember asking him. He was in this closet. I

guess he was scared.

(Interruption.)

MR. KING: We're continuing the tape again. We had to stop the tape for about five or six minutes. It's now 1849 hours, and we're continuing with Firefighter Muschello.

A. So I helped the guy out of the closet there, the OEM guy. I brought him to the search rope. The search rope led to a set of stairs and a set of exits. At that point I said, "You can get out from here." He said, "No problem."

I went back out on the search rope towards the street again, went to look for more people to help. I made it pretty close to tower one across the street. Some guys, firemen, came running out. I don't know where they came from. You couldn't see no more than ten feet in front of you.

I didn't know where they came out from, but they came running and they were yelling something like a bomb or something. They were like, "Run, run, run!" Everyone was running. I didn't really know what they were talking about.

I knew where the garage was, so I said, "Come this way." They followed me to the garage. We ran into the garage. We still couldn't see. A few other guys came behind us, and they said run. We ran in.

At that point we ran past the search rope. Really you couldn't find it. I thought it was to the right, so I headed to the right. I think there was like a ledge or a curb of some type, a little bit of a drop. I kind of got trampled and ran and pushed and went down off the drop. I came down pretty hard, twisted a few things, but you know with adrenaline flowing I really didn't feel it until a day or two later, but I got banged up.

At that point I said to myself my guys from my company probably have to be wondering where I am. I tried to grab somebody with a radio and call my captain, but that wasn't happening. So I decided to follow the search rope out of the building, out of that garage, to the rear.

As I walked down the sidewalk in the rear like that Battery Park City thing close to

the water, I met up with my company, they were coming back to look for me. They thought that I had perished.

Then we were in the back, and I just remember saying, "Captain, I saw three guys that were hurt over there. Let's go back and help them. There's definitely people that we can help over there." He said that the first tower is going to come down too and we're not going over there right now. We'll all group together, look for some kind of command. Then we'll plan from there, instead of just running aimlessly back in and becoming more victims.

One thing I never heard a mayday after that first one was given by the guys in the first tower. I never really heard one. Like I said, I didn't have a radio. I didn't hear too many people telling people in the first tower that the tower had collapsed, that the second tower had collapsed. So I don't know if they were given that information or not.

Some guys said that they knew it collapsed, and a lot of guys said they had no idea it collapsed. So I really don't know what

happened at that point.

Then we walked around in the back there, and I just remember saying we have to try to find as much open space as possible, because there was nothing but tall buildings around, in case any more of them come down.

Then the second tower collapsed, on the first tower. Then we just ran a little bit, because that same puff of smoke engulfed you again. I would say we couldn't have been any more than a quarter mile away at that point. But that smoke went a long way, that dust cloud, whatever you want to call it.

The same thing happened again. I remember seeing a granite wall along the back of -- near the Battery Park City, kind of near where the New York Waterway Parks. I hid behind the granite wall, because I thought that was a pretty safe place.

Then we went out around past Stuyvesant High School. They were evacuating all the students. At that point there was nobody around. But then when we got around to Stuyvesant High School, there were a lot of people over there.

Everybody seemed to be walking along the sidewalk.

We jumped out onto the West Side Highway and gathered up the tools and stokes and things like that and headed back down to help whoever we could.

At that point they were saying all kinds of stories of gas, deadly gas, not natural gas, and stuff like that. So we really didn't know what was going on. We kind of had a feeling that there couldn't have been too many people more that we could help over there. We did go back there, but we just kind of waited until we felt it was a little safe.

Not to mention the fact that at that point a lot of our tools had gotten lost. A lot of our equipment had gotten lost by just dropping everything and running, guys trampling gear and whatnot. We really didn't have the gear that we needed to head back in.

Again, we gathered up what we could, and we went back over. Then we just proceeded to operate for the remainder of the day. Sometime later on that day, I believe after -- when they

told us to evacuate the area for tower number seven, building seven, when they knew that was coming down, I had hooked up with my company, Ladder 119, at that point. I told the captain I was going to set up with my company at that point, because at that point the recall guys were there. There were a lot of guys from each company there, so there wasn't any type of manpower problem. This is later on in the day. I worked with Ladder 119 for the rest of the day.

We were on the Church Street side, which unfortunately -- I was there for two days straight. I never left until the 12th. Actually I didn't leave until the 13th, which would have been Thursday morning at sunlight. That's when I really couldn't stand anymore.

The whole time we were down there, the wind was blowing exactly that way. It was blowing right towards the Church Street side. So we were getting nothing but -- you couldn't blink anymore, your eyes or so dry and red. You couldn't even blink or rub them. I couldn't breathe anymore. It was unbelievable. But we were over there for the whole time.

That night all the cars and that afternoon all the cars and the trucks and everything that were along Church Street were all still burning, and there were water problems. We operated and did different things with the tower ladder.

Actually we were putting water on building number five I believe for a while. Then they moved us over to building number four, and we operated the tower on that.

That's about it.

Q. That's terrific. That's fine.

CHIEF KING: We're concluding this interview. The time is 1856 hours.

File No. 9110251

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD CACHIA

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 6th, 2001. The time is 2 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the New York City Fire Department, Safety Division. I'm conducting an interview with Ed Cachia of Engine 53.

Q. Please state your recollections for September 11th.

A. As far as that particular day, we were in the firehouse cleaning the kitchen, and a member had come in from the house watch and said put on Channel 7, whatever channel it was. He said a plane hit tower one of the World Trade Center, the north tower.

We all ran into the kitchen. Everybody regrouped in the kitchen. We were watching the news, and they had helicopters in the air immediately with the footage. We were discussing more than likely we're going to go down there, this is going to be a big fire.

We all witnessed the second plane hitting the south tower, and with that everybody got kind of psyched up and said we're definitely going to be going down there now, it's definitely

some kind of terrorist act and everybody be safe. Everybody is very concerned.

With that the tone alarm went off, and 53 Engine was called down to the north tower. 43 Truck remained in quarters. As we got on the rig, everybody double-checked their equipment, checked the flashlights and all that.

We headed down. We had a very good chauffeur who went through the park and got us down there pretty quick. I believe we pulled up somewhere on West Street a couple blocks before the towers, the north tower. With that I remember seeing 22 parked in front of us, 13 Truck. They must have gone ahead of us.

We walked towards a command post which was set up by an underground garage across from tower two. There was a chief on both sides of this garage, the entrance and the exit. One was the truck, which was on the southern side. On the northern side of the garage were the engine companies. We were waiting there for our assignments. I believe as we were there a couple companies were assigned into the building. I remember seeing 13 Truck to our right.

Then the jumpers started to take effect as far as everybody's concentration and thoughts. There was a tremendous amount of people jumping from the top floors, and the sound and the vision of it kind of broke everybody's concentration. So with that I remember losing sight or record of 13 Truck, which I believe they soon went in after.

We moved to the top of the hill. I don't remember what companies were in front of us, but we worked our way up to the top of the hill. We were with 44 Engine, I believe. We were about to get our assignment to go into the building, and I remember Chief Ganci on the radio yelling, "There's another plane in the air. I don't want anybody to go into the towers. Everybody stay put."

Then I remember him desperately trying to get information: Is the military going to send a plane up to intercept the plane? He told the chiefs again, "Make sure no companies go in right now. There's another plane up in the air. We don't know what's going on."

With that I remember a chief coming

over to us saying, "53, 44, do me a favor, before you get your assignment, before you go anywhere near this building, I want you to move a couple of rigs so we can get some ambulances in here."

So now that broke up our company. I remember standing there with my officer, Lieutenant Bob Dorritie, and the other members of the company -- Danny Schofield, Louis Giaconelli, Michael Catalano -- went to move some rigs.

As I'm standing with my officer, the people are continuing to jump. Ganci is still on the radio trying desperately to get some information concerning this third plane in the air.

As my officer and I were looking at the south tower, it just gave. It actually gave at a lower floor, not the floor where the plane hit, because we originally had thought there was like an internal detonation explosives because it went in succession, boom, boom, boom, boom, and then the tower came down.

With that everybody was just stunned for a second or two, looking at the tower coming down. Then everybody started to turn towards the

garage. That was it. We were just kind of blown into the garage with all the dust and the debris and material from the building. It came up rapidly right up the street.

As I remember turning, if you were out in the street somewhat, a good amount out in the street, you were kind of blown down the street, where we were kind of forced into the garage. We were very fortunate. There were several companies.

We were encapsulated in this garage for quite some time, maybe 15 minutes or so. You couldn't see. You couldn't breathe. You couldn't even hear because all the residue and material was in your ears and your nose and your mouth.

Then as a few minutes went by, you heard some voices. It was dead silence at first. Just different emotions: How are we going to get out of here? I can't see. I can't breathe. My chest. It was still completely black. You couldn't see an inch in front of your face.

Then I remember an officer saying, "I've got a wall. I've got a wall. I'm going to

hit the wall with the halogen. Follow the sound of the halogen. Come towards me. I've got a wall. We'll get out of here."

As I was on the floor -- I was very fortunate. I landed towards the incline of the garage. I was probably one of the last ones to get into the garage. I felt the incline with my left hand, and I had my light. I remember screaming, "I'm at the entrance. Follow my light." I was telling everybody, "Just follow this light, because this is the way out."

I remember another officer yelling, "How do you know that's the way out? I've got a wall. Come towards the wall." So there was a lot of different emotions and different things going on in everybody's mind at the time.

I started to kind of go up the hill myself, pointing the flashlight towards everybody in the garage, and came across like little tree limbs. At that point you still couldn't see. It was completely blacked out. I knew this was definitely the way to go. Some guys followed me out.

That was it. I remember hearing the

chief's voice. Maybe this is like 15 minutes or so, maybe going a little towards 20 minutes, a little under 20 minutes, everybody kind of followed their way toward the incline of the garage.

The chief said, "We're going to regroup." It started to lighten up just a little bit. It was still kind of dark out but lightened up enough where you saw other people's faces. The chief said, "We have to regroup in another area."

With that guys were asking each other, "How are you doing? Are you all right?" This and that. Guys were starting to regroup little by little. It's still dark out but light enough to see people now where we were standing. People were still jumping from tower two because you could hear the bodies hitting the ground.

Then another chief came over and said, "We have to regroup, but I want everybody to go back into the garage. We're going to have a lifeline set up, and we're going to come out the back of the garage. It's safer." The other chief had said, "We'll walk along West Street and

we'll regroup around the other end of the building."

So with that I remember my officer grabbed me by the shoulder and said we're going to go back through the garage. It's going to be safer. I remember him yelling out to a few other people too we'll go through the garage, it's a lot safer, because at this point in time it's still kind of dark out. People were still jumping. There still was a little confusion as to what was down the block from the collapse.

So a few guys regrouped on top of the garage and I believe started to walk along West Street on the outside. I walked back into the underground garage with my officer and several other guys. There was a lifeline set up, and we came out the rear of this building -- I don't know what building it was -- by the marina.

At that point in time, everybody got out the rear, and my officer and I, Bob Dorritie, was standing there. There was the chief that initiated the entire removal. My officer said to the chief, "Chief, I'm missing a couple of guys. I don't know where they are."

At that point in time, myself, Louis Giaconelli and my officer were the three left standing there with the chief. The chief said, "Send one of your guys back into the building. Maybe they're in the building somewhere. And you two guys stay out here in case they do come out." So I stood there with my officer, and we sent Giaconelli back into the building.

At that point in time, we're looking up at the north tower. I remember my officer saying, "I have a feeling this one is going to come down too." Just as he said that, that tower came down it looked like at the point of impact. We actually witnessed both towers coming down visually. We happened to be looking at that particular time. With that, the tower came down.

We ran towards the marina to seek shelter, and all the debris came over the building we were behind. We were kind of buried a second time with light debris, my officer being ahead of me by the boats, and I just didn't quite make it that far. I just hit the ground and hoped for the best.

You could hear the steel beams coming

down. They flew everywhere. That was it. There's another point in time you couldn't see, couldn't breathe, for at least another ten minutes or so.

I remember finally getting in touch with my officer, calling his name out. It took quite some time, and he had said he couldn't speak because of all the residue in his mouth. I had my mask with me at the time, and I had it on. That was it.

After that we were hoping for the best with Louis Giaconelli who went into the building to look for the other members who were in another place. They moved the rigs and took shelter in the Winter Garden, I believe, at the time of the collapse. We were hoping that he was going to be all right. He had walked out of the building at that time, so we knew he was all right.

So what we did was we walked by the water to regroup in another area, which I don't exactly recollect. We were explaining to the chief we're missing a couple guys. He said, "A lot of guys took refuge in the Winter Garden, which was next door. Let's get some confirmation

before we do anything, but everybody stay here."

Later on we did hook up with the members that we were missing. My officer was extremely concerned and very upset about that. He pursued it wholeheartedly. They regrouped with us.

At that point in time, they were trying to organize some kind of search for the missing members that were caught in the collapse. I remember walking towards tower two, basically back towards the front of the garage where we regrouped to leave the area. We wound up back in that area.

I remember seeing Chief Visconti very visibly upset, standing on a pile of rubble. It must have been a story or two high in that area. He was explaining that we're going to create a line. We're all going to walk across the rubble as wide as we can, and we're going to search every little nook and cranny and hole or cabin, whatever we can find. Where there's a space, you're going to look for the brothers that might have got caught in the collapse.

At that point in time, we did that,

this being maybe half an hour from the point in time of actually leaving that marina area, maybe half an hour after that. I remember several guys came across a fireman's body here, a fireman's body there, a helmet. You saw the back of someone's bunker gear, his legs, a rig twisted under the rubble. Basically that was it.

There wasn't the equipment at the time to dig anybody out, because of the twisted steel. So we put markers for the bodies. They would try and get as deep as possible and close to a body to see if there was a pulse. If there was a confirmation that this person didn't make it, they would mark off the area and we would continue forward, hopefully to find someone that was still alive.

We did that for some time. The inhalation of the dust and the initial collapse just was overwhelming. You were just choking and coughing on your own phlegm and this and that. So we did that maybe 45 minutes or an hour or so.

Then my company and I, we regrouped in another area just to get a breather, because at that particular time more and more firemen were

coming in. My officer said, "Look, we've got to really just take a break here. We're really overloading ourselves here," because he saw our condition. We were kind of waning at that point in time from exhaustion.

So that was it. We went back to another staging area. We regrouped. We replenished water. Basically that was the last thing I remember, we regrouped. At that point in time, other members from our company met us at that area, and they were going off into the area to search also.

I myself personally had my eyes encrusted with the cement and lime dust. The second I stopped working, I couldn't even keep my eyes open. So my officer said, "Look, we've got to get you to see the eye doctor right away," because my eyes were bloodshot red and I couldn't even keep them open at that point, knowing that this was it, we're going to take a break, more guys are coming in.

Then I remember it was a little while after that we all went to the triage center, and everybody was getting treated for eye injuries.

Then they said they felt that we had cornea damage so we should go right to a hospital.

So my officer and myself, I think Mike Catalano and Louis Giaconelli went to Cornell. That was it. That was it for us. We were examined.

Q. Thank you very much.

CHIEF KENAHAN: This concludes the interview. The time now is 2:16.

File No. 9110252

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN COLON

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

J. COLON

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is December 6, 2001. The time is 1:35 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with John Colon of Ladder 43 about the events on September 11.

Q. Please tell us what you know from that day.

A. Well, I'm John Colon, I was a chauffeur for 43 Truck that morning. We were watching TV and we got a run to 43 Street and Lexington Avenue for a person trapped in a revolving door. We go from here from 102 Street and 3 Avenue and it was a 10-91. Then we got called to the World Trade Center. We kept hearing what was going on. I made a right on 57 Street. I went down the West Side Highway and we parked around 4 blocks away, 5 blocks away. We got out of the rig, we got ourselves organized.

We started, not running, but walking fast towards the -- towards one of the buildings. We didn't see whether the first building was down. We really couldn't tell. When we got about approximately a block, block and a half away, the building started coming down. We stopped, we paused because we were in awe. The whole building starts coming down. We turn

J. COLON

around, we run. Luckily we got into a loading dock and I asked the junior guy, Jerry Suden, to force open a chain.

We got in there. The whole building came running down, came falling down. We waited a few minutes. We regrouped, we went back to, I presume it was the second tower, the building that came down, that we were looking at. There was numerous fires all over the place. The officer, Glen Rohan, told Jerry Suden to put out car fires. There were car fires. The rigs were on fire. Jerry got a hose line, started putting the fires out.

We climbed up a 35 foot portable ladder and we helped get the officer from Engine 1, who was deceased. We continued from there. I don't know how much more I could tell you. I could tell you what we did all day long.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: No, that's not really what we are interested in.

Q. So as far as you know, you didn't see any companies go into any particular position prior to the collapse?

A. No, not at all. No, we didn't. We saw the rigs parked there, but I have no idea where their

J. COLON

positions were.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay, thanks a
lot. This concludes the interview. The time is
1:35.

File No. 9110253

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD BANACISKI

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

R. BANACISKI

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: December 6, 2001.

The time is 3:30 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Rich Banaciski of Ladder 22.

Q. Please tell us the events of September 11 as you recall them?

A. We got the alarm for us to respond, just, I would say, a minute after the second plane had hit the tower. Then they actually came over the voice alarm. Actually told the companies to respond outlet. We responded in and it was all the west side companies were actually all running down together, down the West Side Highway, because it was closed going northbound. So we could see what was going on, the two towers, both of them burning pretty good and then we got into, down to the site. We were at the corner of West and Vesey. That's where we parked the rig, in front of the Verizon building.

We were told to bring extra cylinders. We each brought our extra cylinders and we brought our rollups, the whole thing, and we reported in to the command post, which was in front of -- I think it was

R. BANACISKI

the Merrill Lynch building. There was a parking garage. There were two ramps that went in that parking garage.

Q. On West Street?

A. On West Street. We reported in to there and I remember they had the command post set up. They were telling the engines to the one side, all the trucks to the other side, put your cylinders in the middle. We were there. They were getting the command structure going. I just remember we were -- initially we were out by the street and they started having jumpers, so they all kind of moved back towards the parking garage, towards the building, so nothing would come down on us.

We were there I don't know, maybe 10, 15 minutes and then I just remember there was just an explosion. It seemed like on television they blow up these buildings. It seemed like it was going all the way around like a belt, all these explosions. Everybody just said run and we all turned around and we ran into the parking garage because that's basically where we were. Running forward would be running towards it. Not thinking that this building is coming down. We just thought there was going to be a big

R. BANACISKI

explosion, stuff was going to come down.

There was just a tremendous cloud that came into the parking garage. Somebody actually laid out a search rope, I think it was the officer of 76 Engine too, Lieutenant Farrington. He laid out a search rope so some of the guys could find their way to a back door, set up a back staircase in the Merrill Lynch building. We followed that up and we ended up coming out behind the building where the Marina is. Back in there. A lot of guys made their way out there.

We kind of -- from there we kind of regrouped together because we lost each other when the building came down. We all ran, so we kind of regrouped there, got ourselves together. Then there was a lot of people not knowing what to do, do you know what I mean.

I said to the officer, I'm going to go look for our chauffeur and I knew he parked the rig right in front of the Verizon building. I went up there. I started looking for him. He had moved the rig, not knowing now -- now I know, but he had moved the rig. I'm not exactly sure where he put it, but I went to go look for him because I couldn't get him on the radio due to the amount of radio traffic. People looking for this guy, this guy, companies looking for their own

R. BANACISKI

guys.

So I was kind of looking around over there, up and down West Street and looking on Vesey and I just remember there was a police officer standing there and he just started saying, it's starting to lean, it's starting to lean. I remember looking up, looking at the second building and just seeing it starting to move. I just started running back down Vesey towards the water again to where I had come from. That's -- the second building came down there.

So we kind of -- same thing, there was a time period where people were kind of in shock, not knowing what to do. I just remember we finally said we got to go somewhere now. We got to figure out what's going on.

I remember going back up Vesey to West and then they were telling us to go north. Go north up on West Street, because there is a foot bridge north, like an arched foot bridge. Had everybody going north of that. We will regroup up there.

I just remember that's when I started seeing all the guys coming in from home, all the guys from the company and we actually -- everybody from this house, we stuck together and we actually from there, a little

R. BANACISKI

bit of time, maybe an hour or so, they actually started telling us to go here, go there. They moved us from one spot, they moved us on to Vesey again. Because then they were worried about -- we actually searched the Verizon building, because there was reports of firemen there. Basically our whole house searched that building.

They told us to get out of there because they were worried about 7 World Trade Center, which is right behind it, coming down. We were up on the upper floors of the Verizon building looking at it. You could just see the whole bottom corner of the building was gone. We could look right out over to where the Trade Centers were because we were that high up. Looking over the smaller buildings. I just remember it was tremendous, tremendous fires going on.

Finally they pulled us out. They said all right, get out of that building because that 7, they were really worried about. They pulled us out of there and then they regrouped everybody on Vesey Street, between the water and West Street. They put everybody back in there.

Finally it did come down. From there -- this is much later on in the day, because every day we were

R. BANACISKI

so worried about that building we didn't really want to get people close. They were trying to limit the amount of people that were in there. Finally it did come down. That's when they let the guys go on. I just remember we started searching around all the rigs.

That was basically the rest of the day, the rest of the night. We were searching around rigs looking for men. That was it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: All right.

Q. Do you have anything else to add?

A. No.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. Thank you very much for your cooperation. The time now is 3:45 p.m. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110254

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD BATTISTA

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

R. BATTISTA

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 4:49 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan, the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Richard Battista of Engine 76.

Q. Richard, explain to us what you remember on September 11.

A. Well, September 11, the day started out normally just like any other day. The men had gotten up for breakfast and I turned on the channel, I turned on the news TV and we saw that one of the World Trade Center towers had been struck by an airplane. At that time we thought it was an accident. Shortly after, the second plane struck the second building. We started receiving our alarms and everybody came over the voice alarm telling us exactly what to do.

Members started to turn out and we made our way downtown. We took a route along the West Side Highway and on our way down there you could see both towers in flames and you could see a lot of smoke in the immediate area. On arrival we got there, the Lieutenant had - Lieutenant Farrington, told us basically what we needed to do as to - just start getting to a staging area and while he was receiving

R. BATTISTA

his orders from the Battalion, we pretty much kept a wait in front of what is now -- I think was the American Express building.

At that time he just told us basically to prepare, getting extra water, whatever else we might have needed for the flight up. I think he was getting reports of possibly going up to a building, one of the floors in the second tower.

Q. North tower or the south tower?

A. Sorry, the north tower. At this time, I had just been waiting for a while, and all I could remember from my vantage point was seeing civilians jump out of the buildings in the west side of the tower and landing around the surrounding streets. At that time, to be honest I didn't really focus too much on what was going on around me because I was sort of fixated on what was happening up above, so I didn't really get too much of a time to notice what was happening immediately around me. I know there was a lot of people running back and forth and there was havoc, but it didn't really dawn upon me at that time that I should be aware of my immediate surroundings.

Once they started falling, we got a report of a firefighter being injured, from someone maybe

R. BATTISTA

falling, so we decided to move back further away from the tower. I remember specifically the command post, which may have been, I don't know, maybe 40 feet in front of us, something in that nature. When I saw that, Lieutenant Farrington told us to move back so we were sort of underneath a garage area when we first heard reports or guys yelling that one of the towers was coming down. I was able to stick my head out and look up a bit and once I saw that I just immediately turned around and ran into the building.

Within seconds everything was pitch dark. I remember something actually hit me on my shoulder, what it was I don't know. It could have been a helmet, it could have been something that hit me on my left shoulder. Even though we weren't immediately in front of the south tower, in that vicinity, because I wasn't able to see what was coming down around me, I thought maybe it was a piece of the building or something, so at that point I just ducked into a corner and put my -- rolled up in a fetal position, just balled up and waiting for the worst to be over.

Once things settled down I heard firefighters asking for help. Someone actually stated oh, I have asthma. I can't breathe, whatever. So I was one of

R. BATTISTA

the few firefighters that I remember who actually had my cylinder on my back, because some of the firefighters had actually put them down to rest, because we had been waiting for a while.

At this point I turned on my flashlight and I tried to look for anyone that I might be able to assist within the garage area, keeping in mind I didn't know how badly affected the building I was in was. I just knew it was pitch black in front. I couldn't see out where I came in from originally, so I thought who knows, maybe we are underneath or trapped as well.

After some of the haze started clearing, we started seeing bits of light, but we couldn't exactly see the entrance. Lieutenant Farrington had the forethought of getting a search rope tied off to a bannister and made his way out to the back of the building heading towards the west river. He started calling out to the members of the 76 and other companies. We found the line and made our way out the building and back down under some steps and coming out, surfacing on the other side.

At that time I really don't remember too many other faces, because myself, I have a little over a year on the job, so I really don't know too many other

R. BATTISTA

people from surrounding companies, just a few familiar faces.

I do remember once we made it out the back of the building, running towards the river and I saw several members of our truck company, 22 Truck. Those were the only distinguishing faces I could make out. Not only was it hard to see, but a lot of helmets were covered with soot at that point after we made it out the back, so it was difficult to even see some of the numbers, even if I did look for it.

At that point we waited by the river and tried to gather everyone because all the members who were in the Engine that day, I think two of the members might have gone a different way, so we were waiting to catch up with them and then we were waiting to make a voice communication with them over the handy talky, but there was just so much confusion that that wasn't able to happen right away.

Eventually we did meet up with them and we started walking up north when the second tower collapsed. At this point that walk turned into a run very quickly and we made our way to, I believe it's Vesey or on West Street, and started going up West Street until we were able to come to another meeting

R. BATTISTA

point.

Other than that, that's pretty much all I can recall at this point.

Q. The point that you are just talking about now, had the second tower come down yet or not?

A. No.

Q. What happened after you met at that point, did you go back at all or did you stay up there when the second tower came down?

A. Once we made it out to that meeting point where the Chiefs were trying to get a head count over on West Street, I was (inaudible) for a message from the Chief's aide and found out that we had to go back in eventually to find -- to see how many members we could find. This took some time, because like I said, everything was out of whack. People -- whole companies weren't together, so it took some time for us to not only gather the men but gather our bearings, because you could imagine once we were waiting we also got another report of a plane in the area, so we thought possibly at that time that another building around us might get struck.

I remember sitting down and drinking water and trying to get a bite of an apple or something by

R. BATTISTA

that time. When we finally did get our job duties, what we were supposed to do, we started gathering up again and we were told we had to turn out on a spreading fire in what I believe is 6 World Trade Center or the customs building, possibly a bank.

At that point, this was later on, closer to the afternoon maybe, maybe 12, but I'm not exactly sure, during that time --

As I was saying, once the afternoon came around, 12 or 1, by that time I think a new officer had met up with our company, we had Captain Jirak take us into that fire on that 6 World Trade Center where we helped extinguish some fires on the back of that building.

Prior to that, earlier in the day, just to backtrack a little bit, when the second tower collapsed, I remember we were all by the water way, by the river, right on the river's edge, and we were looking in the general direction of the towers, but you couldn't see much, because I believe the other building, maybe 4 World Trade Center or the American Express building, was blocking our view. We couldn't really see nothing but what was up in the sky.

Once we finished extinguishing the fires, we

R. BATTISTA

once again met up on West Street with Captain Jirak and we just waited for further orders to go out and start making searches. That's about it.

Q. Okay, anything else you would like to add?

A. No.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you Richard, for all your help. This concludes the interview it's now 5:05 p.m.

File No. 9110255

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TODD HEANEY

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

T. HEANEY

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is December 6, 2001. The time is 11:10, and this is Battalion Chief Kenahan of the safety battalion of the New York City Fire Department.

I'm conducting an interview with Todd Heaney of Engine 209.

Q. Please tell us any information you have about September 11.

A. All right. I'm going to -- just a little checklist you gave me, Chief, might help me --

Q. Fine.

A. -- if I can use it.

Q. Whatever way.

A. We were here in quarters, just like everybody else, and we saw what happened. When the second tower got hit, we were dispatched on the fifth alarm.

We left quarters. We took the Brooklyn Bridge to Manhattan. En route we could just see the damage to the towers. It was bad.

We got to Manhattan. I think we were dispatched around ten after nine. We got to Manhattan quickly. We were there in 20 minutes, but maybe less. We were there about 9:30. I don't remember where we parked our apparatus.

T. HEANEY

We came down Chambers Street off the Brooklyn Bridge, made a left-hand turn onto Broadway, and we took one of the side streets. Might have been Liberty. I don't remember. I don't remember where we parked exactly, but when we got off the rig, we took our roll-ups, and we took some forcible entry tools, search rope, things like that.

No civilians or anything approached us. It was pretty -- pretty much had people evacuated from around the towers at the time. A lot of people on Broadway and the side streets, but when we got down to the complex, I expected to see a lot of people running around, but there weren't. They had most of the people out.

We saw Engine Company 217 on the corner of Liberty and Church. At that time, I had a handy-talkie, and we were supposed to report to the lobby of Tower 2, but our handy-talkie message told us to report to command post at West and Vesey Street.

Now, at that time, they also were telling us to bring additional cylinders, so our rig wasn't parked that far from where we were, which was Liberty and Church, so we went back to the rig and grabbed additional cylinders.

T. HEANEY

We -- our officer spoke with the officer of 217 for a couple of seconds at the corner of Liberty and Church. I don't know if that's 4 or 5 World Trade Center on the corner, and then there's a Burger King right there.

We proceeded down Liberty towards West Street. We ran into an injured fireman. I don't remember too well, but there was an injured fireman. Dr. Kelly was there. She came out of a building, and they were carrying this fireman. They put him into an ambulance right away.

I asked Dr. Kelly if she needed our help, and she said, "No, we're going to take him to the hospital." We passed 10 and 10's quarters.

I mean, I don't know what they want me to tell them. There were people -- dead people everywhere. I don't know if you want to know that.

Q. What did you do, you know, you can say it. Whatever you saw.

A. You know, they -- the people were just everywhere. Saw some luggage. From the plane, I imagine. A lot of debris from the upper floors, papers and things of that nature.

We ran into a truck company. I don't

T. HEANEY

remember who they were. This was on Liberty. On the corner of Liberty and West is 90 West Street. I know that building, the old -- an older building with scaffolding all around it. This building is located next to 90 West. It's the building -- it's still standing. It has a big slash in it from the -- that's where we bumped into this truck company.

There was some type of, like, promenade there or steps that could go up into, like, some type of balcony, steps that could go down, and they came up to us and said, "There is no command post. We're going to the lobby." And they went to the lobby.

Our officers -- we were very close to West Street at this time, standing right across the street from Tower 2. We thought we could just go to West Street and look. If there was no command post there, we were going to go to Vesey.

At this time we found an officer's helmet badly crushed with a lot of blood on it. I don't know what company it was. I don't remember. 54, 50 something, but it was an officer's helmet, badly damaged.

We continued down Liberty to West Street, and there was this chief standing there in the middle of

T. HEANEY

West, a little bit south of West Street, and he had his own little, like, command post in there, you know, like the flip-up, and he was standing there all by himself.

Before we went to go to Vesey, our officer said, "Let me just ask this guy if he wants us to do something from here." That chief told our officer to stand fast right here, and the buildings came down. Tower 2 came down.

We ran across West Street to one of the financial buildings, which is near the south pedestrian overpass.

Q. Right.

A. The doors were locked. We couldn't get in the building. Two of our guys got caught at that door. Me and another guy got caught outside, and that was it. Just -- the buildings came down. It became black as night.

Q. All your members went the same way, like --

A. We all headed towards that building. That's where we all headed towards. I mean, it happened very quickly. You heard the sound, like a crack, like a giant tree branch breaking, and I was frozen. I couldn't even run.

People were just running past me, and I

T. HEANEY

watched the building, and the top half cracked and started to fall towards Liberty, started to fall towards Liberty Street, towards where 10 and 10 is, and then it just started coming down, and the pounding got louder, and louder and louder, and then we just started running.

Q. What happened with that chief?

A. I don't even know. I don't know what happened, if he made it. I don't know.

Q. I guess he didn't go the same direction you went or --

A. I don't know. He was -- he was a little south of us. We were on the corner of Liberty and West. He was a little south of that, so our officer went to him. We stayed, like, in the middle of West Street right by the Marriott Hotel and the south overpass, the south pedestrian overpass.

When it started to come down, we just ran. There was nothing else to do, and we tried to head towards that building.

Two guys got caught in the revolving door. I didn't find out until later that they were able to break the window and get into the building. Myself and Tommy Hansard, who was working that day, we got caught

T. HEANEY

outside. There was a -- there was a police officer and a woman civilian, who were kind of, like, curled up on the floor. I kind of just, like, curled up with them. I thought that was it. This is the end. You can't outrun the World Trade Center, and the concussion was -- it was deafening, and this hot, super wind blew, and it just got dark as night, and you couldn't breathe because of the dust, and we didn't have our -- we dropped our masks. We had them on, and so we -- really that was it.

I -- I didn't know what happened to everybody else. I thought I was by myself, but I knew -- I knew what direction I was facing. I knew that that building we were running to was the west side, and that if we could make it to the west side, we'd hit the water, and maybe we'd be able to get away, so I crawled along the side of the building, and I had this police officer and this woman with me. They held onto me, and I crawled along the wall until I got to the corner, and I made the right, and we just kept crawling.

Along the way, I found a fireman's helmet from 101, and I picked it up, and I kept calling out to 101 on the way there. Nobody answered. Other companies would answer. I don't remember who answered,

T. HEANEY

but it wasn't 101.

We crawled to just about the end of this building, and we got to the west side where it was a little bit clearer. We got into a restaurant and dropped those two people off there.

Now, I don't think I bumped into my guys again. I went back to where we were to try to find our gear, and I still had the guy's helmet in my hand, and I kept calling out for him, and he didn't answer, so I put the helmet back down basically where I found it.

When I got to the front of the building, it tossed rigs down the street like it was -- like they were toys. They were upside down, on fire. There was a large chunk of the facade basically where we were standing. I didn't know where the officer was or what happened to that chief, but I found Tommy Hansard, the guy who was caught outside with me.

We went back to the west side because it was clearer, and then we found our other guys. They had went through the building and came out basically on the other end, so we regrouped there. We started to head back. We weren't on Liberty. It would be the next street north of Liberty, and we were heading back towards the towers, and we found three firemen

T. HEANEY

climbing -- just coming up out of the rubble. Two were trying to help one, so me and another guy took him. He had a bad head wound.

While we were down by the water dropping off the civilians I was with and that cop -- there was an ESU cop or someone there who said, "I have medical equipment," so I remembered him saying that, and we brought this officer to him, and he had a few people. There was even -- there was a police launch boat there.

It cleared -- the air cleared pretty good down by the water, so we dropped him off, and we started heading back. I don't remember what street we were on. I don't remember exact -- I really don't remember where we were, but as we were heading back, the next tower came down, and again we were just totally engulfed in just debris, and we just curled up next to a building until it blew away.

We made our way back, and everything was gone. Everything was gone. It was gone.

Q. With the second collapse, did you see anything?

A. No, we weren't close enough to the second collapse, plus the dust cloud from the first -- I

T. HEANEY

couldn't even see the tower. I knew where it was, you know. I mean, you could hear the fire.

You had a good idea where it was, but you couldn't see it any more, so instead of walking straight down the block, we just figured that we headed -- we were now more north than we were when we were at the south tower, so we're right near the north tower.

We were figuring if the second tower -- if the Tower 2 came down, Tower 1's coming down, too. Just don't know when, so instead of walking straight down the street, we headed a block south, and then headed east to go back to the towers.

Just figured if the towers are going to come down, we'd put a block between us, we might be able to make it. Just knew that there were guys in the tower. We knew there were guys in the tower. We saw them coming -- I saw them running out of the building, and I knew they didn't make it, and there is no way those guys I saw emerging from the tower were going to make it.

We got back to basically where the Marriott Hotel was. That's the only landmark I can remember, that and the south pedestrian walk, and we got split up

T. HEANEY

from there. They were trying to get water. Marine companies pulled in at the foot of one of the streets, and they just started laying hose, and I just started helping out with that.

My eyes were really bad at this point. I -- they were just really bad, and they bothered me and progressively got worse as the day went on.

I don't know where my company went, but at some point on that street I ran into 102. 102 truck was housed with us, and they were sent to the staging area at the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel on the Brooklyn side when this happened. They ended up walking through the tunnel, and by the time they came out, the towers were down, but they met up with me at Tower 2 basically, what was left of Tower 2.

I don't know where my officer was. I didn't know where my chauffeur was. I didn't see them again. We started stretching hose. We couldn't get water for anything. The satellite units were showing up. I saw the manifolds being brought in.

Officers were pleading for help to try and get a line in place, so I just stayed with them and helped stretch a line. There was a rig there that we were stretching hose off of. I don't know what rig it

T. HEANEY

was. I saw 113 truck, their rig. It was basically intact, but heavily damaged.

I remember getting a drink of water out of their cooler there, and then we just started to put out the car fires, and the rigs were going, ambulances. I mean, there must have been 50 of these things burning heavily. The Scott cylinders and the oxygen cylinders were all letting go. They were all blowing up left and right.

It was quiet in the beginning, but then the radio transmissions started on the radio, and they just didn't stop, who was stuck here. I remember hearing 9 truck being stuck in a staircase and then trying to figure out how to get to them. I think it was 9 truck. I don't know. I don't know what truck it was.

Q. It was 6.

A. Was it 6? I heard that whole transmission of them trying to tell where they were, and them not even knowing that the building was gone, and -- but I knew that they had help. I knew that people were going for them.

I ended up with an officer who seemed to be by himself trying to put out these car fires, so I just hooked up with him, and we put out a bunch of them.

T. HEANEY

By this time, it was really, really getting hard to see. My eyes were really, really bad. I tried to get in touch with my officer several times. The radio traffic really, really started getting bad, because people were trapped. People were trying to find out who was where.

It was very hard to get through. I heard him calling me. I tried to respond. I don't know if he ever got the message. I don't think I even saw him again that day.

Time went by very quickly. Before I knew it, it was four o'clock in the afternoon, something like that, and I was losing it. I was pretty shot. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I couldn't really see too good.

So I went up to -- I went up to Broadway. Someone said that they were -- a recall was being held at City Hall Park, and I went up to -- I went up there and I saw some of the guys from this firehouse who reported for the recall, and I told them what I knew.

I knew that 102 was okay. I saw them in the collapse. The collapses had already occurred, and they

T. HEANEY

were still alive, all of them. I told them who I knew was still alive from 209. Again, I didn't know what happened to the chauffeur or the officer. I just told them who was alive.

I went back down. I went back down. I tried to -- I flushed my eyes out with water. It wasn't helping. I went back down. Finally, one of the guys found me, and they put me in an ambulance, and they sent me to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. They treated me there, and they put something in my eyes that numbed them, and like a miracle I could see again, and it didn't hurt. So I left there. I told them I'm okay, and I went back.

And the last thing I remember was being on Church Street, seeing 4 and 5 World Trade Center blazing. Every floor of the building was going, and just thousands and thousands of people coming now -- our guys, cops, people -- I don't know. Just thousands of people just started showing up.

Within a half an hour, that medicine they gave me wore off, and I was totally blind again. One of the guys found me. It happened to be one of the guys from this firehouse found me wandering around. I couldn't see. I was -- I was shot. I just couldn't do

T. HEANEY

anything any more, and they sent me to Pace University, where I got triaged and sent to the hospital from there. And that's all.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Well, thanks for your help, Todd.

And the time now is 11:30. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110256

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER BRIAN FITZPATRICK

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

B. FITZPATRICK

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 4:00 o'clock p.m. and this is Battalion Chief Kenahan of the New York City Fire Department from the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Brian Fitzpatrick, Firefighter Sixth Grade from Ladder 22.

Q. Hi, Brian. Just tell us in your own words what happened.

A. I'd say that morning, on September 11th, it was 8:48 a.m., one gentleman at house watch, one of the firefighters, saw on the news flash that Tower 1 was hit, the north tower was hit by a plane. Everybody started getting their gear ready because we knew we were going. I was actually kind of excited because I thought it was going to be a big job. We didn't know the size of the plane that hit it. We just saw a lot of smoke. Our tones went off and it was a voice alarm and they were basically just calling companies off. It basically ran up the west side. I remember it going from 35, 40, 74, 25, straight up the west side they were calling us, and we responded. I'm almost 100 percent sure that we were en route pretty much when the second plane hit. I don't remember seeing it on the news when the second plane hit. So I'm almost 100 percent sure we were en route.

B. FITZPATRICK

When we got down to the scene, it was pretty hectic. We pulled up close to the north tower and then saw that it was pretty ugly, a lot of debris falling, a lot of people running. We moved the rig and went to the west side command post. Ladder 22 and Ladder 25 I remember seeing go to the north tower. I mean, I apologize, the south tower. We were basically standing fast just watching what was going on.

I remember hearing people shouting about a third plane being in the air. I don't know if that's what held us back from going right away. But we waited basically until I saw our Lieutenant Farrington coming back and we thought he had our orders where we were going. So we were grabbing our gear and we were walking out to meet him and we were in front of the parking garage in front of 2 World Financial Center, the Merrill Lynch building, which is basically on the southwest corner of the north tower and right across the street from the Vista International Hotel, and that's when we heard a tremendous noise and it was coming from the south tower, and we looked up and it was coming down.

I basically froze and Rich Banaciski shoved me and told me to run, and I remember there being a

B. FITZPATRICK

large number of people behind us as we turned to run. I remember making it into the tunnel and it was this incredible amount of wind, debris, heat. I remember falling down, getting back up, and the guys were just falling all over each other. It wasn't like we were trying to kill each other, but it was all bets were off, just run.

I made a right in the tunnel. I was with some other guys. I can't remember the engine company. They're from the east side. They were trying to force a door in the right of the tunnel and it turned out to be a storage shed. I remember when I fell down, I picked up a mask and I put the mask on and I was buddy breathing with a few of the guys because the air was so thick and pulling out like baseball clumps of debris out of your mouth. We knew that we couldn't force that door.

My Lieutenant, Farrington, from Engine 76, we heard him screaming and banging his tool against something metal and I distinctly remember hearing his voice. He had found the exit to the back of 2 World Financial Center, and it was a maze of stairways, but we got out. He found the exit, set up a search rope, brought it back, and he got out about I'd probably say

B. FITZPATRICK

40 guys out of the tunnel.

Then we exited out by the marina, the North Cove Yacht Harbor, where we all basically just took a knee and we waited a couple of minutes. Everybody was in shock. We didn't know what happened. We just thought it was debris or an explosion or a secondary explosion or another bomb inside the building or another plane.

We got up and we made our way around through what turned out to be the North End Avenue and we hit Vesey. I'd say probably 25 minutes had elapsed by now. We were walking up Vesey and we got to Vesey and the West Side Highway and we were making the turn. I remember seeing the bridge as we turned and somebody came running by us saying the north tower was leaning. I didn't even know the south tower fell yet. I looked up and I actually saw the antenna coming down.

I just took off running again. I headed straight down Vesey. I wound up breaking up with the rest of my company, and I wound up by the railing by the water. I remember there was a bunch of senior men there and they were getting out of their bunker gear and they were getting ready to jump in the water because you could see ferries out in the distance

B. FITZPATRICK

waving us on. They said, "Get out of your gear. We're going in the water."

When I was younger, I used to work out in the Hamptons on people's boats and I remember currents. I knew the currents down there would just kill us, you know, they'd find us in South Jersey. So I just buried myself in the fence and hoped for the best.

The debris cloud pretty much caught us, but it seemed like right by the time it hit North End it stopped. I think the wind was blowing a different direction. It was pulling it all east. That's what it turned out to be because I remember the command post, everything that was set up later was set up on the west side because the wind was taking all the smoke and debris east.

I wandered around looking for the rest of my company, which was Rich Banaciski, Richie Batista, Billy Reynolds, George Rodriguez, and George was with the rig and we were sure that he was under it, and Lieutenant Farrington. It took me, if I had to guess, I'd probably say about 45 minutes before I found the rest of my company and that was on the West Side Highway and everybody was just lying on the West Side Highway. By that time there was just hordes of firemen

B. FITZPATRICK

coming down the West Side Highway whatever way they could get there. I guess it was the recall. I don't know if that was hours later, but I remember seeing guys that weren't working that day that came down, and we were all just waiting to get back in.

When they let us back in, it was early afternoon. I'd say it was probably 1:30, 2:00 o'clock. We searched 140 West, the New York Telephone Company building, for 15, 16 floors. It was myself, George Rodriguez, Doug Robinson, a battalion aide, and Captain Pellegrinelli. We forced numerous amounts of doors, but we were basically searching in the wreckage of, if you were on West Side Highway, it would be the exposure four side of the telephone company building. It had gaping, massive holes that you could fit a house in, you know, what it looked like from the inside. So we basically crawled in the rubble there and looked for victims on each floor because the holes took up several floors.

We heard a Mayday for everybody to get out of the building -- no, I'm sorry, an urgent, three urgents, and we came out of the building. I'd say that was like an hour and a half, two hours later. We were then positioned on Vesey Street between North End and

B. FITZPATRICK

the West Side Highway because there was an imminent collapse on 7 World Trade, and it did collapse.

As far as other companies, I don't know. I knew from sticking my head out the window going down that we were by 35 and 40. I think they were ahead of us when we pulled in. I'm sorry. 35 Truck and I can't remember the engine down there, 25, 74, I think 47 was there.

Q. These are all the rigs that were on West street?

A. Yes. We were headed down together. From what I saw, we all pretty much met up on the West Side Highway at the same time because the alarms went off and we're all fairly the same distance from the on ramps.

That's about it. That's my story. I wish I could be more helpful.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: No, that's been fine. You've been very helpful. Thank you for your cooperation.

THE WITNESS: No problem.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 4:10 and this interview is completed.

File No. 9110257

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER LOUIS GIACONELLI

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

L. GIACONELLI

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 6, 2001. The time is 6:52 p.m. and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Louis Giaconelli.

Q. Please tell us anything you remember about the events of September 11th.

A. I reported in for work before the change of tours and I was already ready to drive. I was assigned chauffeur that day in Engine 53. I was upstairs in the bunk room when the first plane hit the first tower. I heard some of the other firefighters talking about it. I slid the pole, made sure I had all my gear on the rig and made sure that the rig was full of fuel.

Then the second plane hit the second tower. I was pretty sure after the first plane had hit the first tower that we'd be going down there, and when the second plane hit, I definitely knew we were going down there. Then we were assigned on the second fifth alarm to the second tower that was struck.

I started to drive down there. I went on various streets. I do remember going down Lexington Avenue to 97th Street, I believe, and then I went down 5th Avenue to the 90th Street entrance to Central Park,

L. GIACONELLI

and I went down Central Park Drive on the east side to 72nd Street, across 72nd Street, and I got on the West Drive and came out of the park by Tavern on the Green on 66th Street, I think, and Central Park West. I went down Broadway to 57th Street, made a right, and I went to 11th Avenue, where we started to pick up radio transmissions that we were to respond down 11th Avenue because the police had opened up lanes for us or they had corridors open for us. So I went down 11th Avenue and, sure enough, we picked up a few police cars in front of us or vans and we made it down there pretty quick.

When I got there, there were already a significant amount of rigs there, and I found a parking spot along the right-hand side, along the west side of West Street, and I actually was close to a hydrant that I could have hooked up to if I had to. I noticed that rigs were parked on both sides of the street and that there was a lane open straight down.

So when we got there, we were driving down, obviously, we had a clear view of the towers. We knew that both of them were on fire. There were thousands of people running up West Street when we were driving down, thousands of people. So I parked the rig.

L. GIACONELLI

Everybody got out, got their masks on, and I yelled to my officer, I said, "I'm not going to stay here with the rig." I said, "I'm going to come with you guys." He said, "Yeah, definitely." So I had all my bunker gear with me and I had a spare mask. So I put it all on and I went down with the company. We walked down West Street and we reported in to the command post staging area.

As we were walking down, I was just looking up and I saw it was a lot of smoke, but it was up high. It was a crystal clear day and there was a lot of stuff in the air, in the sky, floating around, and I was trying to get my bearings. I saw something weird coming off the building and I looked up and I didn't know what it was and I was trying to get a sense of what was happening, if things were falling on us, but it turned out they were bodies. There were people jumping off the top of the buildings. So then I realized how bad it was up there.

We got in to the command post staging area and my officer Reported in and tried to get us an assignment. So we stood in the staging area, which was in the driveway to an underground garage going into the World Financial Center. We stood there for a few

L. GIACONELLI

minutes and made sure we had all our gear on, and we were trying to figure out what was going on and it was a calamity. A lot of smoke, a lot of debris coming down, bodies coming down, landing right in front of us.

So while we were waiting to get our assignment, Captain John Sudnik, who I knew from 23 Engine, I think, was giving out the assignments and he asked my officer if we could move some rigs to make sure the lanes were clear coming down to the World Financial Center. So it was myself -- I wasn't the only chauffeur working. I know Kevin McGovern was working, too. He was a chauffeur. Eddie Cachia was working also and he was a chauffeur. So we had those two guys and two probies with us.

So between the three of us, we dropped our masks and all our gear, we kept our bunker gear on, though, and we walked back up West Street to see if any rigs had to be moved, like he asked us to do, and we found one or two. I know I myself moved one or two, I don't recall, that were blocking the path a little bit, and I got them out of the way. Then we got together again and we all started walking back down West Street.

I remember passing underneath that north

L. GIACONELLI

pedestrian bridge, and I was just about to get back to the entrance to the driveway to the staging area and I heard this sound, and it was like a train, like a huge train rumbling, and I knew that something was coming off the building, but I didn't know what it was. So I think Lieutenant Doherty and Eddie Cachia were in front of me. We were kind of walking in single file, and I think those two guys were in front of me and I was third or fourth. I don't recall. I know the two probies were behind me and I think Kevin McGovern was a little behind me, too.

So I remember Lieutenant Doherty and Eddie Cachia went for the driveway and I said to myself I wasn't going to make it, but I knew I had to find someplace to ditch. So I looked to my right and a High-Rise 2 Unit, which I didn't notice at the time what it was, but I figured out later a High-Rise 2 Unit was parked on the grass to the right of the staging area driveway and just in front of the entrance to the big glass atrium going into the World Financial Center. I didn't think I could make it to the entrance of the building. I think that's where Kevin McGovern went, and I don't know where the probies went.

So I just dove underneath the High-Rise 2

L. GIACONELLI

Unit. I dove underneath there, and just as I got underneath there, the first building had collapsed. I didn't realize the whole building had collapsed. I knew something significant had come down, but I didn't realize at the time that it was the whole building. So I dove under the rig and there was another guy underneath there with me. It turned out he was a fire patrolman. He wasn't a firefighter. But we were under the rig and the next thing I knew, I heard the crash, I felt the impact, and it went from day to night.

We couldn't see anything. I couldn't see anything, and then, of course, we couldn't breathe anymore, and the guy next to me starts yelling that he couldn't breathe, couldn't breathe. I had my hood around my neck and I was able to get it up over my nose, and between breathing through my hood and into my coat, I was able to breathe for a while. I just laid there for a few minutes and tried to stay calm and get the other guy calmed down and I just waited until I thought everything was safe again.

So after a few minutes we were able to see some light again, and I started to crawl out and I dug myself out and then I poked my head out from under the rig. The other guy came out with me and we stood up

L. GIACONELLI

and kind of shook each other, made sure we were okay. I said, "Are you all right?" He said, "Yes." He said, "Are you all right?" I said, "Yeah, we're all right."

So with that we kind of went our separate ways, and I just took a quick look around and I don't recall ever looking up. I don't really ever recall looking up. Not that there was anything to see. It was all dust and debris and there really wasn't much to see.

So I made my way back just a couple of feet into the driveway and I went looking for my mask and I found it. It was right where I had left it and it was buried, but I was able to dig it out. Most of our equipment was still all there and everybody was clearly shook. I don't mean shook that they were scared. They obviously had been affected by the impact of this thing, and we were all covered with dust and dirt and debris and you couldn't breathe and that stuff. So I got my mask on, but by the time I got it on and hooked up, I didn't have to put it on my face. I was able to breathe normally. I made my way down into the entrance of the underground garage and into the World Financial Center.

L. GIACONELLI

So we decided to make our way up the stairway of that basement of that building up into the upper floors. When I got into the building and we started finding our way in there, we were kind of strung out and I was still with Lieutenant Doherty, I think, and Eddie Cachia. Kevin McGovern and the two probies, I don't know where they were. I remember trying to find my way through this maze down there and I finally found a staircase and made my way up.

Somewhere along in that process I came across the members of Ladder 16. Danny Williams was the officer I remember and I know Stevie Wright was there, Joe Petrich, Oscar Davila, and I can't remember who else. But they had an EMS worker, I don't know if he was a New York City EMS worker, but he was definitely an EMS worker or EMT, on a stretcher, not a board, not a back board, a stretcher, and they asked me if I could help them carry this guy out. I kind of said, "Well, what's wrong with him?" They said, "We think he has a broken leg and a broken arm."

So he was kind of a big guy and they were having a really tough time trying to get him up the stairs because it was a real tight staircase and this guy was big and we had all our gear on. I mean, I had

L. GIACONELLI

all my bunker gear on and my mask, and we were trying to carry this guy up. I think there were about four or five guys from Ladder 16, me and maybe one other guy, I don't recall, and we struggled to get this guy up these stairs. We struggled so bad that even at one point I asked the guy if it was possible that he could walk because we were having such a hard time with him, and the guy said he didn't think so.

Anyway, we wound up carrying him up. I don't know how many flights of stairs it was, but we got him up. I think it was probably at least three, maybe four flights, and we popped a door and we wound up in the huge atrium or lobby of the World Financial Center. We carried him out and I made it through the building and came out on the back side of the building. So now I was in I think it's the harbor area. I don't know what it's called.

Q. Marina?

A. The marina area, I guess. So that building is 2 World Financial Center. That's the Merrill Lynch building, I guess.

So I came out on the other side and I found Lieutenant Doherty from 53 and Eddie Cachia from 53 and they were searching around there, and we talked for a

L. GIACONELLI

few minutes and made sure we were okay and tried to digest what had happened to us. We started searching around, and I was curious or worried about what had happened to Kevin McGovern and the two probies. Somehow or another they went in one direction and I went in the other. I wound up going into, looking at the map here, it says the Winter Garden, which was this glass atrium that I was in.

So I went into the glass atrium and I started working my way to the front of the building. When I was in there, it was pretty desolate. I didn't see any other firefighters and I really didn't see any other people, except I do remember seeing a few civilians walking around and they looked like they were workers from the building, not us, but maintenance workers that had semi-uniforms on.

So I started working my way to the front of the building and I got to the front door of the building. When I got to the front door of the building, I took a quick look up and I saw that the north tower was directly in front of me, still burning, and I don't really remember looking for the south tower, but my view might have been obstructed at that point because the Winter Garden door was a little set

L. GIACONELLI

back from the World Financial Center entrance.

So I took a few steps outside the entrance of the building onto the stairway there, and the High-Rise 2 Unit that I had been under when the first building came down was parked right there on the right-hand side on the grass. I took a few steps and I was looking around, and the next thing I knew, I heard the same sound that I'd heard when the first building had come down. So I didn't have to look up. I knew what the sound was. I didn't have to look up. It was the same sound I had heard when the first building came down.

So, again, I was caught out in the open and I didn't really know where to go. I guess instantly I decided not to go under the High-Rise 2 Unit. I decided to turn and try and run back into the building. So that's what I did.

As I ran through the door, I remember saying to myself close the door behind you, close the door behind you. But, of course, I didn't really have time to do that or even attempt it. I just tried to run as fast as I could, and I didn't get very far. The building came down and, of course, the concussion from the impact blew me down and knocked me down and blew my helmet off my head and sent me flying down I guess it

was the hallway of the main entrance of the building.

There was a tremendous crash and glass and then the same effect that had happened the first time. It went from day to night. A huge, huge blast of hot wind gusting and smoke and dust and all kinds of debris hit me and blew me over and covered me, and the same thing. I just tried to get my head down into my hood and my face inside of my coat where I could try and breathe again because it was the same thing. I couldn't see and I couldn't breathe. It was just a repeat of the same thing that happened to me the first time.

So I waited, it seemed like an eternity, but I waited a few seconds, and then, of course, I remembered that I had my mask on my back this time. So I reached back and turned it on or made sure it was on, I don't recall, and grabbed the face piece. Of course, I blew into the face piece like you're supposed to do and it didn't make any difference. The face piece was full of debris and dust and who knows what else. I took a couple of quick hits off it and I got two mouthfuls and nosefuls and my eyes all full of stuff that was in the mask and the stuff that was all around me.

Eventually that cleared up and I was able to wear the mask. I got my mask on and, of course, I started hearing some screaming and yelling around me. So there obviously were some other people around, and then I remembered that I had seen a few civilians or these maintenance workers in the building to my right as I had walked in, so then now they were to my left.

So I started crawling along the floor because I couldn't see anything, and I was right alongside the wall and I got my right hand on the wall and started following the wall along, and I found my helmet. Hard to believe, but I found my helmet. It had been blown down the hallway a distance and I came across it and I was able to get it on my head. I had also had a flashlight. So I just crawled along the wall, crawled along the wall, and I heard a guy screaming in front of me and, sure enough, I eventually came to him and found him. I grabbed him and told him he was okay, and I just said, "Stay with me and we'll find our way out."

As I started going along, I came across the other people that I heard yelling or screaming in the atrium. So I got them all together and I had them all hold on to me or follow me along the wall and somehow or another I saw light. Even though it was pitch black

L. GIACONELLI

where I was and we couldn't see, I saw light coming from somewhere. I said, "Let's go. Let's see where this light is coming from."

It turned out that it was a storefront and the light was coming from another atrium that was behind the store that was in the atrium. I don't remember if the door was open or whatever. I didn't have to force the door, but we were able to open it. Maybe it just swung open. I popped in there and it was clear as a bell in there. We could see and we could breathe. So I got all these people in there.

What these guys were doing, and I give them a lot of credit, these maintenance guys, they had a woman, a black woman, I remember, and she was kind of large also and they, much to their credit, were trying to carry her out of this building. They were inside the building, but they still got impacted by the collapse of the north tower.

So I got them all into the storefront and got them all calmed down. They were pretty excited and nervous. I got them all calmed down and I said, "Okay. We're okay here. Just stay here," I said, "and I'll find a way out and then I'll come back and get you. So just stay here. I'll find a way out and

L. GIACONELLI

I'll come back and get you."

I put my mask back on again and I had my flashlight, the same thing, just followed along the right-hand side of the wall, worked my way around. I went through the whole glass atrium and I found an exit door and I popped out, and again I popped out onto the harbor side of the World Financial Center. So then I got my bearings and I left the door open and I retraced my steps back to the same store that I had left the people in and got them out. I counted heads and I made sure I had, I believe it was seven people. I made sure I had seven, and I said, "Okay. Let's just follow me and we'll just follow our way out." I just followed the wall all the way back and they followed me, and I got them back to that exit door and got them out into the harbor area and that was it. That was the last I saw of them.

Then I started looking around, and it was pretty desolate down there. There was really nobody around. Off in the distance I saw my Lieutenant, Bobby Doherty, and Eddie Cachia from 53, and they had been down by the seawall when the second tower had come down. They said they had wedged themselves up against it and still got blasted there, too, tremendously. I

L. GIACONELLI

guess you could say they were kind of far away but really not far away enough, and they were impacted enough that Bobby Doherty said he actually thought he was going to have to jump in the water to get away from it.

So then we regrouped, the three of us, and we didn't know what to do really. It was clear that where we had been had been completely demolished and devastated, and we were in pretty bad shape. Our eyes were full of stuff and, of course, our noses and our mouths were all full of debris and we were trying to breathe. Because we knew we couldn't use our masks constantly. We would run out of air. So in the open air we had to breathe the air. We just couldn't use our tanks for any length of time.

So we started working our way north around the back of the World Financial Center, and I guess we either went through the back, the glass atrium behind the American Express building, or we went on -- I'm looking at the map here. It looks like maybe North End Avenue. I don't recall how we found our way to Vesey Street. But somehow or another we found our way to Vesey Street, and then we went over to West Street and we started to walk north.

L. GIACONELLI

We went north about as far as Barclay, I believe, and we sat down along the wall there and we tried to collect our thoughts and figure out what to do and what had happened to us and all that. I don't think we ever really realized that the two buildings had come down. I guess we maybe knew it but we weren't sure. We sat down and, again, we were surrounded by hundreds of people, a lot of cops. Everybody was covered with dirt and dust and debris.

I noticed a lot of people had cell phones. So for some reason or another we asked somebody if we could use their cell phone, and Kevin McGovern called his wife and we asked his wife to notify my family and Bobby Doherty's family that we were okay.

Then we sat there for a few minutes and we came across a lot of people, but I remember specifically running into Pete Clinton, who was the chauffeur of Engine 22, and Joey Graziano, who was the chauffeur of Ladder 13, and they looked shook, but Pete Clinton was all banged up. He wasn't wearing bunker gear. He was driving. He just had shorts on and a work shirt, and he was all banged up and bruised and covered with dust and clearly distraught. Joe Graziano had all his gear on. As it turned out, they were the

L. GIACONELLI

only survivors of their company, and I told them to stay with us. They stayed with us for a while, and then we decided to make our way back down West Street back to the site to see what we could do. We didn't stay up there very long, maybe ten or 15 minutes.

So we made our way back down West Street and on the way down I started looking for our rig. I didn't know where our rig was. I couldn't remember where I parked it. Of course, the whole landscape now changed, so I had no idea where it was. So we started walking down West Street and I was looking for the rig, looking for the rig, and I couldn't find it. I thought for sure that it had been crushed.

So we made our way back down as far as we could and started searching around, and I asked somebody if they knew where 53's rig was and somebody, I don't recall who, said they thought they saw it, it was over on the west side, somebody had moved it. So I told Bobby Doherty, "Let's see if we can find the rig," because, obviously, if we could find the rig, we could get some tools and maybe fresh bottles for our masks and start working down at the site.

So all of us took a walk over on Vesey Street and, sure enough, there was the rig. It was hooked up

L. GIACONELLI

to one of the marine units. It was already hooked up and pumping water. It was relaying water to another engine and they were supplying a tower ladder with water. I guess they were pouring water I think on the Customs Building. We also noticed that 7 World Financial Center was fully involved there, too.

We started getting whatever gear we needed off the rig, and there was another chauffeur working on 53's rig and he was supplying water. He asked me if I was the chauffeur of 53, and I said yes, I was. He said, "Would you mind taking over here? I'd like to get back to my unit." I said yeah, sure, I would, and I basically operated for the rest of the day while 53's guys went down to the site. I went over there a few times, but I basically operated 53's rig for most of the day pumping water, relaying it to the other engines and the tower ladder.

I did go over to the site a few times to try and help out, but my eyes were very bad and I couldn't really see very well. About 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon, I finally had gotten them washed out once, but it didn't work, and I started going to the triage areas and washing my eyes out, washing my eyes out, and they just weren't getting any better.

L. GIACONELLI

I wound up staying down there. I was down there from about 9:20 in the morning until maybe 10:00, 10:30 at night, and we wound up going to the main medical facility and they told me my eyes were no good, they had to take me to the hospital, and they wound up taking me and Eddie Cachia and I think Bobby Doherty, too, to the hospital, where they worked on my eyes and checked me out for anything else that was wrong.

One thing I forgot to say was, after the second building had collapsed and we worked our way up West Street, I had run into the two probies that I had been looking for all morning, Mike Catalano and Dan Schofield, and they were okay. I still to this day don't really know where they went. I don't know if they ran into the Winter Garden glass atrium or if they just went up north on West street after the first building had collapsed, and I don't know where they were when the second building had collapsed.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. Well, thanks a lot, Louie. We appreciate your cooperation. The time now is 7:22 p.m. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110258

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER VINCENT PALMIERI

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

V. PALMIERI

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: The date is December 6, 2001. The time is now 11:08 a.m. This is Battalion Chief John Malkin of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department.

I'm conducting an interview today with Firefighter first Vincent Palmieri of Engine Company Number 6 regarding events of September 11, 2001. We are in the quarters of Engine 4. There is no one else present in the room and the interview begins now.

Q. Say whatever you like.

A. Basically I was on my way into the city that day through New Jersey when I first heard of a plane hitting the Trade Center and I tuned into 1010 WINS to hear what was going on. Being from lower Manhattan, I knew all the companies would be there. As I was going further in on the Turnpike, I started coming in through the Holland Tunnel when the second plane hit. I was able to actually see the Trade Center, both of them, smoke coming from them.

I went through the Holland Tunnel, got in, started heading towards my fire house, which is 6 Engine. I got to 6 Engine and got my gear together, changed, put my uniform on. I took a quick look at the

V. PALMIERI

cars outside quarters so I would have an idea of who was on duty that day, but I really didn't look at the riding list or anything like that. I made a quick mark in the journal so someone would have some sort of idea that I was on my way over. I just started heading over to where I knew the company would be, or the lobby command post would probably be set up in the north tower.

I walked up Park Row, made a right, went down Vesey Street, cut across Vesey Street, crossed Church and started heading towards the entrance of 5 World Trade Center, which is right on that corner. Just as I was about to get maybe about 20 or 30 feet from the entrance of 5 World Trade Center, is when the south tower began to collapse.

I was with a female police sergeant, a group of civilians and I got everybody against the building wall which is right by Borders and Books and we took cover under the overpass of 5 World Trade Center. Then basically the collapse occurred. I wasn't totally sure if we were caught in it or not. Just basically waited until we had some sort of visibility to try to make my way out.

I waited a period of time, I'm not sure of

V. PALMIERI

the time here, because I lost track of time. I waited till I had a little bit of visibility, turned my light on and told everyone to stay with me. I decided the best thing to do would be to get away from the area, since I had no idea of what was going on. We were going to try to head to the end of the building line following the wall and then head diagonally across Church to the opposite corner of Vesey, then try to go up Vesey and get out of here.

I had everybody stay with me. There was one gentleman, a civilian, who was cut pretty bad. I believe it was on his right arm. I told him just follow along. We would get him medical help as soon as I could. As we followed along the wall, I came into a group of ESU officers, so that was right outside of Borders and Books on that corner. They had donned air masks. I think they were either ESU or Port Authority. They weren't firemen. The masks looked different and they weren't in fireman gear.

They were headed actually back towards the entrance of 5 World Trade Center to try to go in the building. I was like, guys, I don't know where you are going, but we don't know what happened. I wouldn't try to go in. Let's get out and find out what's going on

V. PALMIERI

before we go in. They said good idea. They turned around, I said we got to go this way out. They started going along the wall like we were.

When I reached the end of the wall, they went one way and I led, and I stayed with the group of people. I brought them across the street like I said, diagonally across to the northeast corner of Church and Vesey. There was a construction awning up there. I went underneath there. There was a beauty parlor like on the corner. A few stores in off Vesey there was a deli.

Some police officers had already taken the front door to the deli. They took out the glass and they were getting people inside there. There was still a lot of smoke, but visibility was pretty decent, not totally dark.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: It's 11:12. I had to shut the tape. We were interrupted by somebody coming into the room. We now resume at 11:13 hours.

A. Again, Palmieri. Basically, there was an officer, he took out the door to some sort of deli. He was getting people in there. We were still in a light smoke condition, not too bad, but we didn't know what

V. PALMIERI

was going on. People that I was with and a female sergeant, I told the officer get them in there, one of the guys is hurt bad, you got to get him in an ambulance. I'm going to go back and try to find my company. I just wanted to find my company and find out where they were. I knew where they were probably at, so I turned around and as I'm getting back into Vesey Street a Suburban comes down Vesey Street, a Fire Department Suburban comes down Vesey Street.

A bunch of guys jump out, I go up to the officer who was in the passenger side. I said where are you guys from. They said they are from the Rock, research and development, if I believe correctly. I told them okay.

During this I only had my bunker coat on and my helmet. After the collapse I dropped my bunker pants. I figured we would be walking up 80 flights either way, so I was carrying the bunker pants. I left the bunker pants after the collapse. I only had the coat and a helmet. The officer asked me, are you all right, are you okay? I said yes, I have no mask and no pants. They were gearing up, they were going to go in and try to do a search and find some guys, so I told one of the guys, look, I only got shorts on, I'm ready

V. PALMIERI

to go, do you have an extra pair of bunker pants? He gave me his bunker pants and his boots. I couldn't get a mask from them, but I was able to get an axe and I got a search rope. I think there were 3 firemen and two Lieutenants. They asked me to stay with this other Lieutenant, he seemed a little bit older than the rest of them and he walked with a limp. I don't know any of the guys' names.

There was also an Engine parked on the corner, which would be the southeast corner of Vesey and Church. He was hooked up to a hydrant and he had the spicket going and the water flowing. I went over I told the guys wait up a minute. I washed off, got the stuff out of my eyes, cleared my mouth as best as I could and took a drink.

Then they started heading up Vesey Street, that would be westbound down Vesey, along the World Trade Center site. I was with the other Lieutenant, like I said, so we were maybe a half block behind them. I said Lou look, I know the area down here. I have been here a long time. I don't think it's the best move for us to walk up Vesey Street. We don't even know what happened.

At that point I don't think either of us

V. PALMIERI

could look up. There was still too much smoke to know that the entire south tower had collapsed. We thought maybe a portion collapsed. So I said I think we should go one block north and come down Barclay, which is what we did. We went down Church and started to come down Barclay and that was just me, this Lieutenant and it was actually an off duty former union president, Boyle.

We met up with him. He was looking for his son, who was in 33 Engine that day. The rest of the guys just decided to continue up Vesey Street. I never ran into them again for the rest of the day so I don't know what happened to them.

This officer and I were walking down Barclay Street. I don't know the exact -- how far down we got. Also with Boyle when we heard the same noise that I had heard before. I knew it was the second building starting to collapse, the north tower collapsing. The officer I was with had his officer's tool. We just happened to be under a construction type awning and in front of 2 glass doors to an entrance to one of the buildings on Vesey. I don't remember the exact address, but I know it is DC 37's headquarters, I think.

V. PALMIERI

He made the move, he started to take the front doors. I had the axe. I moved with him. We took the doors, went into the lobby, looking to see if anybody was in the lobby. At this point the building continued to collapse, the building is surrounded by smoke. We ended up meeting an Engine Company, I believe, from Brooklyn in the lobby. Half the company was there. Half of their company was still in the street.

One of the guys was like my officer, an Engine officer and the chauffeur was still out in the street. We made it into the lobby and I was like, there's a lot of dust out there. It doesn't look like the collapse came this far up because the other buildings would have blocked it. So I believe their rig was parked on, you don't have it marked here, and I don't know the name of the street.

Their rig was either - I don't believe it was West Street, this street here. It's between West Street and West Broadway. Between Barclay and Murray. I think it's Greenwich Street. I think that is the name of the street.

Q. Greenwich?

A. Greenwich. I think that's the street they

V. PALMIERI

were on. So he took the search rope and him and one of the guys decided they wanted to go out and find their officer and the engine chauffeur. We said all right, we will wait here. We will give you a few minutes. If you don't come back we will follow the rope out and come get you.

We took a feed and waited for them to come back and the Engine officer and the chauffeur were fine. They just took a feed. They were in the street but they were okay. There was, I don't believe, any serious injuries.

Basically, then we were in the lobby for a few minutes. A couple of guys made phone calls to their wives and stuff. The original officer that I was with from the company from Research and Development, I don't know if he worked there, but he came with them from the Rock, decided to go out on his own and try to find his guys now. I decided I would stay with this Engine Company and operate with them as a company. I tried to get them to come around with me and look for the main entrance for the north tower of the Trade Center to try to get in.

Basically that's what we did. We stayed together. We walked out down Barclay, got to West

V. PALMIERI

Street, came up West Street. I noticed an Engine hooked up with a couple of lines coming off of it. I noticed he had a hydrant, he had a good hydrant, he had good pressure, it looked like. He was right on the corner of Barclay and West. As we walked up West Street we could see a lot of cars burning, a lot of smoke, other than the smoke from the collapse. There were cars burning all over Vesey, up around the park, a couple of rigs, a dumpster, right on the corner of Vesey and West burning.

Of course 6 World Trade Center was right on the corner of West and Vesey burning. Still there was a lot of smoke. I wasn't sure it was a total collapse of both buildings. I didn't realize that until much later on in the day.

I told the officer, we've got an Engine here with good lines if you want to get a line and try to get something in operation. He said fine, let's go up to Vesey, go a little closer and try to get an assessment of what's going on. Like I said, there was a huge dumpster on that corner going, right next to the AT&T building.

So he said, all right, go back with a couple of guys. We searched and grabbed one of the two and a

V. PALMIERI

half inch lines that were laying in the street and we started to operate it into the dumpster. At around that time we were there for a little while. He went off just a little bit to see what was going on. Trying to find guys, find out what we should do.

Vesey Street -- I don't remember if it was totally blocked at the time, but there was definitely, definitely stuff across Vesey Street that you could see. You couldn't get totally down Vesey. Maybe all the way to West Broadway. You could see the damage at 7 World Trade Center, the damage into the AT&T building. You could see the damage - 5 World Trade Center was burning. There was an aerial ladder up at 5 World Trade Center. I saw guys operating up into 5 World Trade Center trying to do some sort of search. I'm sorry, let me correct myself. 6 World Trade Center, right on the corner of West and Vesey.

There was an aerial ladder parked on West Street operating to the concourse type area on the 6 World Trade Center looking for guys and they were trying to do a search. At this time the truck was intact. 6 World Trade Center was almost fully involved in fire. We operated the line into the dumpster. We stayed there for a little while and then I saw one of

V. PALMIERI

the first members of my company to come in and it was actually Captain Sakowich. He had walked up West Street. He saw me. During the time that I went back to the Engine to get the line I was able to get a mask off the Engine. Captain Sakowich came up to me, asked me if I seen the guys or whatever.

I said Captain, do you know where Engine 6 would be. I was trying to operate with these guys. The walkway on West Street for the north tower was down. So there was no way to walk straight into what would have been the old lobby of the north tower, where 6 Engine would have been. So he said I'm going to try to find a way around. Stay here. He said give me your mask for now. I stayed with the company.

Then I found another member from my company, maybe, I don't know, 20, half an hour later, Firefighter Jeff Straub, hooked up with me. I told him Sakowich was around. He was trying to find a way over to where the guys were. He said let's not wait here. Let's try to find Sakowich or let's try to find our own way in.

We proceeded to walk down Vesey Street, West Street was totally blocked. We couldn't get across. We got to the corner of West and Vesey. Chief Nigro

V. PALMIERI

was there and I saw Chief Pfeifer and a couple of other guys from the Battalion. I don't know if they responded in or they were there prior to the collapse.

Basically Nigro -- a lot of the officers were trying to get information from Chief Nigro as far as to what type of operations he wanted them to commence.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Chief Pfeifer was just saying I don't know what happened. Let's just get everybody down Vesey towards the water away from the scene. Myself and firefighters Straub had just broke off from them and we walked around through the World Financial Center area, which would be through the lobby of 3 World Financial Center, the American Express building, out into where the Winter Garden is, but on the outside, not actually into the Winter Garden. You could see the Winter Garden had took a lot of damage also.

While we were on the outside near the marina, walking near the marina, because we were going to try to come around up Liberty to see if we could gain access from West Street there, we encountered another group of firemen that were carrying a fireman on a stokes basket. I don't know what company they were

V. PALMIERI

from, but I do have pictures of that. A photographer took pictures of us doing the carry so I could give you his name if you need it, in a pinch, probably the road.

There was only maybe four or five firemen helping to carry this guy, so we helped to carry him. They needed help. We carried him to a boat that was waiting. It was a marine company boat. I don't know what marine company. They got him on the boat. I believe they were taking him to a Jersey hospital. They really didn't say. They got him on the boat. Me and Jeff stayed together and we started again to come around Liberty Street. Liberty and West in that area, then we came across, I found Captain Mallery from 10. I saw Captain -- I think you already spoke to him. From 10 Engine. I asked him where their guys were. If they know how their guys are doing. They basically didn't know much about where their guys were or anything or where my company was.

Again West Street was pretty well blocked. There wasn't any good access into the area then. That's when we basically started to realize it was a total collapse, so we tried to make our way into this pile or into the area where my company would have

V. PALMIERI

been. We went down. Liberty Street was pretty well blocked. We couldn't go down that. We continued down West. I think we went up Cedar, then took Washington back to Albany to try to get to where 10 Engine's quarters were and see what was going on over there and see if we could come in kind of like from the southeast corner or so.

I got over by 10 Engine's quarters. There was a lot of damage to the quarters. There was a lot of destruction in the street there. That wasn't any other easier access. We ended up somewhere around this area again, meeting up with Captain Sakowich. Trying to get back around through the Winter Garden area over there. Sakowich and Firefighter Straub, then, and myself, we walked around looking for guys and basically the day just dragged on. We would get separated, I would run to numerous different guys that I know throughout the job and trying to find reports of who is where and stuff like that.

Eventually we end up finding the easiest way back out on to the pile is through the Winter Garden where the glass had taken a lot of damage, but it was still intact at this point. Then we got out on to the pile there and started doing some searches over there.

V. PALMIERI

As the day dragged on, again I got separated from Jeff and Captain Sakowich. I kind of was operating on my own for a while with a lot of other guys. I don't know even know who they were. I just started getting fatigued. I came out just to take a rest a little bit, out into this area here again on Vesey and West and I ran into Firefighter Bob Emans. I asked Bob, Bob, were you here, who was working, et cetera. He gave me a quick rundown of who knew was on the rig, where the rig was, what he was doing. He was an extra man. He jumped on the rig that day and he was assisting the chauffeur.

So he capped up the hook up and supplied the Siamese and then that's when the collapse occurred. I had absolutely no idea of the time of the day. Bob might have had a better idea and Bob was like look, I think the best thing we should do right now is go back to 6 Engine, try to regroup, find out who is where, definitely who is missing, who might be in the hospital and come back and get back. We got to get something to drink. We need something to eat. It was a long day.

I was like all right, Bob, start heading back. I'm going to head back in a little while. I stayed a little bit longer, I don't know how much

V. PALMIERI

longer. It could have been maybe an hour or so. I saw Firefighter Al Sicignano from my company. I told Al what was going on, how long I had been there, who I had seen so far and that was probably just Jeff, Captain Sakowich and Bob Emans. Bob had said that Jack Butler was also okay. He was the chauffeur that day from 6 Engine. The rest of the company we had no reports of where they were. We knew they were in the building, we didn't know where.

So then I told Al, I saw Bobby, he said he thinks it's a good idea we go back to 6 and try to regroup and come back in a little while with a better plan or something. Al was like all right, go ahead, you go on your own. I will meet you back there in a little bit. I left and went back to 6 Engine.

While I'm at 6 Engine, getting phone calls from some of the wives, specifically Lieutenant (inaudible)'s wife. Gave her whatever information we could and that's when 7 World Trade collapsed. So that might give you a time frame of how long I was there.

Stayed at 6 Engine for a while. I don't remember who else came back and I grouped up with a couple of guys, a handful of guys. We headed back over after we got something to drink, a little something to

V. PALMIERI

eat. I headed back over, spent the remainder of the night there until late into the night. Ran into a brother-in-law of one of the firefighters who we knew was missing that day, Billy Green. His brother-in-law is a corrections officer, at the corner of West and Liberty, with Jeff Straub. He was looking for him. Had no idea where he was. I just told him that and I told him I would be in touch with the families or him as soon as we found somebody and just stayed there a long time that night.

Basically didn't see anyone from the company that responded that day at all that day. I don't remember now. I ended up going back to 6 Engine sometime late that night. Got back to 6 Engine. Most of the guys that had reported in from home were already back at 6 Engine. I was glad to see Butchie Barone and a bunch of guys, because I knew that they might have been there before me, even though they might not have took a mark in the journal. I didn't know who was where. I was glad to see most of the guys.

That's when I started to find out exactly who was missing from the company and there were reports that Billy Green was okay. He was in a hospital but it wasn't confirmed yet. That's it. Just various

V. PALMIERI

information like that.

We just operated as a company for the next almost week or two on our own going back and forth. The rig was crushed, so we weren't really responding. We didn't have a rig for a week or so, so the company basically just woke up every morning, ten or 15 guys would get together, walk over, one or two guys would stay at the house and try to keep the house organized with one officer, just to have some sort of idea who was where in case anything else happened.

Every once in a while they would be relocating company. I don't remember if that was like day 3 maybe or 4. That's basically how we operated until we went to an actual AB chart. When we went to the AB chart, really didn't make much. The guys that were on duty got to go definitely, except one of the guys that was on duty had to stay at the fire house. Guys that were off duty geared up and went over. It was almost like as we were drawing straws of who had to stay back and that was it. I don't know what else.

Q. Okay, very good. You mentioned that north walk bridge was completely down?

A. Yes.

Q. You couldn't cross West Street because that

V. PALMIERI

bridge was down, but it became necessary to go up and down West Street you had to find a way around?

A. Right. That's what we were looking for. There was a total collapse in that area. There was no way in. No way over or around. You couldn't even probably bring portable ladders to get a truck in, because there was just too much debris in the street. There was a lot, lot of rigs parked on West Street between Vesey and Murray, both sides of the street. Just rigs all over the place.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. I thank you for the interview. The time is now 11:30 a.m. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110260

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DANIEL STERLING

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

D. STERLING

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: The date is December 6, 2001. The time is 1434 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin, safety battalion, New York City Fire Department.

I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter 6th Grade Daniel Sterling, Engine 24, regarding the events that occurred on September 11. There is no one else present in the room, and the interview is following right now.

Q. Just talk in a normal voice and tell me what happened.

Where did you respond from?

A. We responded from quarters. I was getting off duty at nine o'clock that Tuesday morning. The alarm came in at 8:47, so I had been relieved already. We're a five-man engine, so because it came in as a second alarm, and I just got on the job in February, I rolled as the doorman, to get, you know, experience. Second alarm fire, we don't get that.

So we were riding down -- I was the doorman -- and going south. The control and the nozzle could see that we actually had a good job. There were a lot of people standing in the streets, looking down toward the building, but based on my position, I couldn't see

D. STERLING

what they saw.

We pulled up to the twin towers on West Street and into the lobby of the north tower. We got there about nine o'clock before the second building got hit. We didn't know the second building got hit at nine o'clock or anything.

When we made it into the lobby, there was debris falling from the building. Guys were trying to vent those big windows in the lobby. I saw 33 engine in the lobby. I recognized one guy, who I didn't -- who wound up being missing, but I remember seeing him in the lobby. He said, "Hey, how you doing? We're here to go to work" and whatever. We were in the lobby waiting for the elevator. They set up the command post, and we are trying to find out if we were going to be able to take the elevators up, because they said that there was a reported fire on the 80th Floor, so, of course, we were going to try to get to the elevators.

After about maybe four, five minutes, still no elevator. They're saying the elevators weren't working. Ladder 20, the officer from Ladder 20, decided to start walking up the stairs. He like rallied his guys. So we're walking. We're going to

D. STERLING

start walking. Everybody at that point started walking up the stairs.

We -- my team started up the A staircase, and we were following Ladder 20. I guess all the other companies were following behind us. We ended up going up single file. Civilians were coming down single file. They were telling us what floors they were coming from.

Lieutenant Hanson was the officer, so he was finding out what floors they were escaping from, what the conditions were like on their floors, and by the time we got to the 11th Floor, people started to get tired.

We got up to the 15th Floor, and we were -- started taking breaks. The 15th Floor might be open, and then the consecutive ones would be closed up until about the 21st Floor, so we came off the 15th, and we heard Maydays on the radio from Ladder 10. Ladder 10 had two men down with chest pains. We heard that on the radio.

Then we would keep going. When we stopped on the 15th Floor, we took a survey of the floor, found the vending machines. Guys had broken the vending machines already to start taking out the water, so we

D. STERLING

were taking bottles of water, taking a break, and then going back on the stairs. We kept doing that every five or six floors, wherever there was an open door.

Realistically what happened is it took us about an hour to get to the 37th Floor, and the guys at that point -- well, at the 27th Floor, my lieutenant decided to drop two roll-ups, because we were taking the four roll-ups and the control bag. We were taking a beating just going up the stairs, getting tired, so we dropped two roll-ups on the 27th Floor, and we left one of our members on the 27th Floor because he really -- he didn't feel he could make it any further.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. So we continued up. We got to the 37th Floor, and we were about to drop the other two roll-ups, because Lieutenant Hanson said he got word that we were just going to back up 33 engine, so we were going to use their hose. We weren't going to take any of our own hose.

At that point when we were on the 37th Floor, that's when the building shook from the other tower going down, so -- but we didn't know it was the other tower that was going down. A battalion chief -- the battalion chief from Battalion 11, came from a higher

D. STERLING

floor. He came down and saw us on the 37th Floor and told us that he thought there was a partial collapse of the 65th Floor of our building, and that we should drop everything and leave the building.

Lieutenant Hanson didn't hesitate. He had us drop everything, and we started to leave the building. We were right by Staircase A. The vending machines were around the corner to the right of Staircase A, so a lot of the guys that were taking out water and stuff ended up hanging out right in that hallway by the vending machines, which also had a staircase to get out of the building.

So when the chief told us to leave, we immediately started down Exit A, and I think he ran around the corner to tell the other guys that were hanging out in the hallway with the vending machines to also leave, but when the building shook, everybody instinctively ran for the staircase, because it shook for about 10 or 15 seconds, and we all, like, ran to the closest stairwell, so I guess everybody that was in that hallway ran for the staircase close to the vending machine, and I know for a fact Ladder 5 was in that hallway. There were at least 15 other guys, aside from Ladder 5, because Ladder 5 was in quarters with us, so

D. STERLING

I know all the guys that were there, and I'm making jokes with them. The lieutenant was sitting down.

ESU cops were handing out their oxygen bottles for guys to take oxygen, so we were like -- everybody was trying to relax for a minute, drink their water and get up their energy to keep going up the stairs, but when it shook, we went back down Staircase A.

We had another probie with us, Rob Byrne. Byrne, when the chief says, "Drop everything," he took his face mask, and he took his mask off and everything and left it there. And we started going down. We all kept our mask.

I just -- I didn't see giving up my mask at that point. It's not that heavy to me, but he wanted to go quick. He said, "When he said drop everything, I'm dropping everything."

So we started down. When we got to around maybe the 10th Floor, there was a lot of smoke, and I guess just dust coming up the stairwell, so we all started masking up. At that point, Byrne had the -- he used his hood.

Q. Go ahead. At 1507 hours, we resume the interview.

D. STERLING

A. We were exiting the building, and Byrne was using his hood to cover his mouth and his nose because of the smoke and dust that was coming up the stairwell. We started using our masks to breathe through the smoke and dust around the 10th or 11th Floor.

On the way out from the 37th Floor, we did stop at the 27th Floor to meet Rich Billy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He looked like he might really need the break, so we left him there, and on the way back, he hooked up with us.

So the entire engine was making its way out, and when Lieutenant Hanson noticed that Byrne was having to use his hood, he sent Byrne ahead. He told him to go ahead and run as fast as he could to get out of the building, because we were moving down in a slow, orderly fashion, like, making sure we didn't really make any errors on the way out. We were going slower than Byrne could have made it on his own without the mask, so he went ahead.

At that point, we got all the way down in the A staircase to the 3rd Floor. Apparently the ESU cops

D. STERLING

had -- they put a piece of Sheetrock blocking off the 3rd Floor, blocking off the A staircase going below the 3rd Floor, so we exited the A staircase at the 3rd Floor.

Q. Yeah.

A. We ran into two ESU or Port Authority cops, and they were helping a guy in a swivel chair about -- he was at least 300 pounds. He had broken legs, and they were trying to pull him through the hallway to get him to the B staircase, which they said was good. They said that they were responsible for blocking off the staircase, because there was debris now in that staircase. We couldn't have made it out to the ground level that way.

So we helped them with the civilian. We took him in the swivel chair down the B staircase. We had a new swivel chair in the lobby of the building, because we broke that one on the way down. We broke that stair -- we broke that chair dragging him down the stairs. We put him in a new swivel chair and dragged him out the lobby, and we left the north tower on the north side. The north -- we came out the north side of the tower, and we went right across to 6 Trade Center, to the Customs building.

D. STERLING

Q. Okay.

A. We collected ourselves under that little, like, overhang.

Q. Okay.

A. There's an overhang there. We waited for a second, cut the civilian out his pants to make it easier for him to move. Then we all started moving west. Excuse me, east. East up to the corner of that building where we could kind of make it out to Vesey Street.

I went ahead of my team. There were about four people helping this guy walk through debris, and everything that had fallen, I guess it got pushed out to the Customs building from the first tower that fell. There was a lot of debris.

So as everyone is helping the civilian, I really couldn't help the civilian, because there were already four guys helping him move. I went ahead. I got ahead to the corner, made the corner, and went down in between these two buildings. There were two Port Authority cops standing at this corner of the building, of the U.S. Customs building.

Q. Okay. We're talking about going between the two buildings. That would be 6 World Trade Center,

D. STERLING

U.S. Customs building, 7 World Trade Center. He was going north between those two buildings.

A. Five.

Q. Was that 5? Between 5 and 6 rather, going north?

A. I got there to that corner. There were two cops, like, directing traffic, and when I got to that point with them, they said, "All right. You go ahead and run diagonally straight over this way," there were some stairs to get out -- to get off of the courtyard level.

Q. Okay.

A. Because this whole area is on, like, an elevated courtyard. You're above the street. So I stood there, and my team still hadn't come around the corner of this building of the U.S. Customs building, so I decided to wait for them to come around the corner before I made my run.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. While I was waiting, it was maybe 30 seconds, this tower fell. I never saw them come around the corner.

Q. Right.

A. Because everything started falling. It went

D. STERLING

pitch black immediately. I was standing there with the two cops. We were pressed against the side of the building, so everything that fell kind of, like, fell in front of us.

So at that point I masked up again, and my viber alert started going off, so I know I didn't have that much air, but when it went pitch black, we all assumed that the building had, like, fallen on top of us, because we couldn't see anything at all. We assumed were trapped inside, like, a big void.

So I put my mask on and everything, and I started crawling on the floor towards the other building. I started crawling on the floor towards 5 World Trade Center.

Q. Okay.

A. I noticed that there was fire on the ground. The courtyard now had dents in it, like craters from where things had fallen through. So I regrouped, stood up, and decided to start feeling along the wall, and that's when I started bumping in -- I bumped into one guy from my team, Rich Billy, the same guy who we left on the 27th Floor.

I saw him. He didn't know where the lieutenant was, and he was -- he was -- he thought I

D. STERLING

was a lieutenant. Then he started -- he had a radio. The door position didn't have a radio. He started giving Maydays and looking for Lieutenant Hanson. We were also with four other -- four firemen, and they had a civilian.

We took our area of refuge in Building 5. We made it into a window into the lobby of that building when everything was still pitch black, before the smoke had completely risen. We went in the building, and you could notice, like, big chunks sticking through the ceiling of that building. So we were just waiting around. We're going to have to, I guess, start digging our way out or wait a little while and see if anything else is going to fall. Then gradually the smoke started to lift and the dust and everything.

Q. How long?

A. That took about -- it seemed like no longer than ten minutes.

Q. Okay.

A. Maybe about seven to ten minutes it started to lighten up, and you could see shafts of light starting to come through from, I guess, this direction, Washington Street. Like you could see light.

So at that point, when it lightened up good

D. STERLING

enough, you could look over to the edge of the courtyard and see where the rail was. The rail had gotten knocked off, but you could see the top of street lights --

Q. Okay.

A. -- the curve of the street light coming up over the courtyard level. So I told Rich Billy, "Let's go over to the edge there and see if we can make it to the street over there," because at least you noticed -- you could see the top of the street light. The street is not that far below.

He didn't really want to go across the courtyard at that point. He told me he felt that -- that if other things started dropping, we might be -- we would be in jeopardy by going across. He has 20 years on the job, 18. He has about 18 years on the job, but I was already a little nervous, and seeing the things coming through the ceiling, I'm telling him, "Well, if more things fall, they might -- everything might come through the ceiling," so our area of refuge to me wasn't that good anyway. It was fine while we were standing there, but if more things fell, they were going to come through the ceiling anyway.

So I said, All right. "Well, you stay, but

D. STERLING

watch me. You watch me make it over. If I make it over there, and I don't come back, know that you can come off that way, because I'm going."

Q. Yeah.

A. Because I figured maybe I would be able to jump across to -- the street lamp didn't look that far from the edge. I figured maybe I could jump across and slide down the street lamp and maybe to the street or whatever, but he didn't do it.

I went, and there was another fireman that came with me. I don't know his name or what company he was from, but he was much bigger than me, taller guy and heavier. So when I got over to the edge, I realized I couldn't jump over to the pole. It was about maybe a five, six-foot jump over to the pole and then slide down. I just dropped the mask and hung off the side and dropped down to the ground and ran straight up.

I must have run a little bit this way. Then I started heading north. There was also two cops, I guess in front of 7 World Trade Center or around this corner somewhere pointing towards the north, just go north, because I never looked back at the building to figure out that both towers had completely fallen.

D. STERLING

Q. Right.

A. As soon as I dropped down to the street level, I noticed there was an engine that was abandoned, and there was a cop car directly behind the engine, and a whole row of cars that was on fire, so I ran past all those cars and started heading north. That was it.

I got about four, five blocks before I really started limping. I sprained both my ankles just dropping off the side there, but I didn't catch up with Rich Billy until maybe seven o'clock that evening. He told me he waited about five, ten minutes after I left, and then the guys he was with just kind of walked around the courtyard and found the stairs and took the stairs down. I actually -- they had a picture of him on CBS News, I guess, like, when he finally made it, walked down the stairs, because he was still covered in all the gray dust, and he just looked beat. I guess that was right when he walked down the stairs. They got a picture of him and, like, two other firemen he was walking with, and I told him, "I saw you on the news." He was, like, we found the stairs. I took the stairs down.

Q. Uh-huh.

D. STERLING

A. I didn't really -- I couldn't wait for the stairs. I couldn't wait -- I was too impatient. I was already -- I had already thought we were dead. Like, when everything went pitch black from everything being bright, you got outside to the bright daylight, and the cops are telling you to make a run this way. It was bright. Then all of a sudden it was pitch black. Fire was on the ground, craters, so that was it.

But when I made it out, I went up -- I ended up on West Street, and the ambulance took me to St. Vincent's. I got my ankles wrapped. Before I got there, I was able to call my parents. I called my grandmother. I spoke to my grandfather at about 10:30, because there was a civilian who let me use the phone when I was walking up. Then I got to St. Vincent's. I called the firehouse, and I was back at the firehouse by about one o'clock, and the chauffeur was here. The chauffeur that drove us down there was at the firehouse, Otto. Then we -- we kind of regrouped and went back to West Street to look for the other guys.

We found Marcel Claes. He was our control man. He started walking down with us from the 37th Floor, and we walked -- we were all together, and we come to find out -- he told us he stopped and went back

D. STERLING

to get the control bag after -- we dropped everything, and we started down. He went back to get the control bag, started back down the same A staircase. He said he cut across the 7th Floor and made it out the building before we did, but everybody in the engine made it out.

Q. They did?

A. Yeah. Everybody that was in the engine that day made it out.

Q. Were they safe? Did anybody perish from the engine? They were all okay?

A. Yeah. Everybody from the engine made it out just fine. I got hurt the worst, a sprain in my ankles after the fact, but everybody in the truck that was with us on the 37th Floor, none of them made it out at all.

Q. No kidding.

A. None of the truck made it out. We had two other guys that weren't working that day from the truck that went in. They never made it out.

Q. Were you with them on the 37th? No? Yes? Did they get the message to leave the 37th the same time you did?

A. Yeah. Apparently the chief went around the

D. STERLING

corner and told everybody --

Q. Yeah.

A. -- to start leaving the building, too, but I think they must have got caught up for some reason going down the staircase that they were going down.

Q. Yeah.

A. I think they were going down either the B or C. We were in the A. If you walked straight down the hallway, they were calling that the B staircase, and the hallway came into like a T. There was the vending machines in this hallway, and there was another staircase in that hallway, so they went down that one.

We went down the same way we were coming up, the A, because when we went and got our drinks, we came right back, because we were going to start walking up again. We were just taking the A staircase all the way up.

Q. Yeah.

A. But --

Q. When you guys were walking down the stairs, when you had been ordered to walk down the stairs, now, you had been climbing for a long time, maybe an hour?

A. Yes, just about.

Q. Now, you turn around, and you start coming

D. STERLING

down. Were there a lot of civilians still coming down the stairs or you were booking in that staircase?

A. There was nobody in the staircase on the way down.

Q. Nobody?

A. Nobody at all. I guess the only reason that the cops had that one civilian was because he was hurt, because he -- he couldn't walk on his own.

Q. Right.

A. They had him in the swivel chair.

Q. Right.

A. A lot of people were making it out of the Tower 1 when we were going up. Even on the way up, we ran into one businessman who was coming down from the 90th Floor, so he made it all the way down from the 90th Floor. He said he saw fireballs come at him, and thought he was going to die, but then he got to a good staircase and made it down. He was helping a lady with an asthma attack, and at that point we put him in an office on about the 21st Floor. We put him in an office off to the side of the staircase.

So I'm hoping he got out, because we were figuring we can put people in a safe area of refuge below the fire.

D. STERLING

Q. Right.

A. So we told him to just hang out over there, but he was just fine. Somebody told me they saw some blood on his shirt, but he was coherent and everything. He told us he was coming from 90, and there was a lot of fire on 90, so we're thinking, man, we got 10 floors of fire, and we got roll-ups, but we still didn't know the jetliner or anything.

We're thinking small plane, because when it came across the teleprinter, it was a small plane hit the building.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. And when we arrived, you could just see smoke and fire coming out, but it didn't look like when you see the news footage of the second building getting hit. It wasn't a big explosion like that.

Q. Yeah.

A. It was just fire and smoke. That was it. That's it. I mean, that's pretty much the most scary experience I've had.

I get a little nervous every now and then at regular fires, but that's, I guess, because I'm brand new, but that -- the thought of being stuck is not good.

D. STERLING

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: That's an
interesting story. All right.

I want to thank you for the interview. The
time is now 1521 hours.

This concludes the interview.

</XMP></BODY></HTML>

File No. 9110261

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EUGENE KELTY, JR.

Interview Date: December 6, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Kelty, Jr.

BATTALLION CHIEF MALKIN: Today is December 6, 2001. The time is now 10:44. This is Battalion Chief John Malkin of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with Captain Eugene Kelty, Engine Company 10. We are at the quarters of Engine Company 4, regarding the events of September 11, 2001, at the World Trade Center.

There is nobody else present in the room at this time, except the Captain and myself, and now the interview begins.

A. Okay. My name is Captain Gene Kelty. I'm the Company Commander for Engine Company 10, which is located at 124 Liberty Street, which is the firehouse right opposite the World Trade Center. I was off that day. My partner, Lieutenant Gregg Atlas, who was working and is still missing in action, was working that day.

We were on the golf course at a company outing that we have in our neighborhood when we got a report on the pager that the fire -- the towers had been hit. Knowing that that was my company, I

Kelty, Jr.
responded in with my brother, who is a supervising Fire Marshal, James Kelty from Manhattan base, we got in Manhattan somewhere around, I would say, around 9:35, a quarter to ten. We went up to my quarters, because we were changing into our work clothes so we could go and start our assistance on what was going on within the building or outside the building.

When we got into the building, there was a lot of civilians in my kitchen, which is on the backside of Cedar Street, between Greenwich and Church, and they had been quartered with us when the plane hit the buildings, and all the debris and stuff was coming down. Captain Mallery was in the building at the time, and Lieutenant O'Malley, my Lieutenant from Engine 10, was in the building. Captain Mallery is the Captain from Ladder 10. Captain Mallery was in my office with my brother and we were evaluating what was going on and he was giving us a briefing regarding the first plane that hit the tower, and then the second plane.

At that time, which was probably somewhere around a quarter to ten, the second tower, World Trade 2, came down. Unbeknownst to us, we were

Kelty, Jr.

upstairs, we heard the building shake, a lot of debris came down, and the building was hit with a dust cloud.

The apparatus doors were open, because I went out on the second floor by my office, and it was pitch black from the air conditioner that was blowing in the bunkroom of the second floor. I looked out the window. It was pitch black. All the dust that was coming down Greenwich Street headed southbound. We went down the stairs to see how everybody was doing downstairs. There was people all over the place. People with broken ankles, broken legs, femurs.

We went into the kitchen and we started evacuating the house, because we didn't know exactly what happened, other than the building came down and collapsed. It was later determined that it was building World Trade 2, which is the south building that came down. We started evacuating everybody. I had not gotten out to the street yet. We just made sure that we could get people out the back door, that's the Greenwich Street side, and we were having everybody go down up to Trinity Place and go south. We were heading them towards the Statue of Liberty

Kelty, Jr.
way, Battery Park. Captain Mallery, myself,
Lieutenant O'Malley were in the building doing the
evacuation.

At the time, I think, the Captain or the
Lieutenant went across the street. There was a
Lieutenant that was injured at 130 Liberty Street,
which is the Deutsch Bank, and they were assisting a
first-aid case over there. In the meantime, I
continued the evacuation.

Most of the equipment in the building was gone.
All that was left was my turnout coat and I grabbed
the truck helmet. I had an understanding that the
building was taken over by civilians and everybody
else and all our equipment was taken out of the
building and had been ravaged by civilians and
anybody else that needed equipment that day.

While we were evacuating people, there was an
ambulance in the engine bay, that was stuck in the
engine bay because of the debris that came down from
World Trade 2 and there was no way of going out the
front door, other than climbing over piles of debris
that was there. After the tower came down, we made
the determination that we weren't sure if any other
building would come down, so we evacuated the whole

Kelty, Jr.

building. I went through and did a search and there was two EMS people that were still left in the building. Again, Captain Mallery and Lieutenant O'Malley were across the street at 130 Liberty Street. I went into the kitchen to make sure there was nobody there when I heard the rumble of Tower 1 coming down. I don't know the time that it happened. I just heard the same rumble I heard when Tower 2 came down, the same thing, and I took cover in our kitchen.

The only people left in the building were the two EMS people and after the tower collapsed and we got more debris thrown in our kitchen, I opened the door to go out to the apparatus to find out if they were okay and they were right behind the door. We pulled them in the kitchen and the two EMS people were hurt, but they were conscious and stuff, and we evacuated them out. I evacuated them out of the back of the building and they went down the street towards the south.

After that I checked with Lieutenant O'Malley and Captain Mallery to make sure that they were okay and that they were still alive, because I didn't know what happened when the second tower came down,

Kelty, Jr.
which is World Trade Center 1. They were across the street. I was calling to them. I managed to get a hold of them. We went over there and there was a -- at the time, too, when we were evacuating the building Ladder 124 was there. They assisted with moving people up the block and down to the south. They helped work with EMS. When we went over later on, after the second tower, I went over again to see if our Captain was okay. They had stabilized the Lieutenant. I think he broke his leg and his shoulder, and dislocated his shoulder. Lieutenant O'Malley had packaged him up -- Captain Mallery, and we started on our way and we started going down Greenwich Street south to Albany; to Rector Street, we made a right on Rector Street to head over to the west side, away from any more possible collapses until we figured West Street would be open.

We took them over to -- I think there was two other firefighters with us. I don't know what company they were. We stopped on the way on Carlyle Street, between Greenwich and Washington, to take a break and make sure that the Lieutenant was okay. Captain Mallery I think remained and I think he was doing a search at 130 Liberty. We managed to get

Kelty, Jr.

down to West Street and Carlyle and we ran into an EMS person and we passed off the Lieutenant to him, and they backed him out on some type of vehicle. I think it was a flatbed truck. And then Lieutenant O'Malley and I started to search some of the buildings. We went into the Marriott Hotel, which was, I think, 85 or 90 -- 85 West Street.

There was a security person in there and we talked to him. He said that the whole place was evacuated. We told him we wanted him out of the place, and made sure that everybody was accounted for. After that Lieutenant O'Malley and I went down to West Street. We started walking around on West Street seeing if we could see any surface victims to rescue and stuff. The whole area was covered with gray ash from the debris that came down, and then we ended up splitting up. I was trying to head over to the north side, which was Vesey and West, to see what was happening over there. There was no access on West Street due to the World Trade Tower 1 coming down, part of 3 was down on West Street and there was no way up Liberty Street due to World Trade 2 that collapsed.

I went through the back way, which was through

Kelty, Jr.
the World Finance Centers, cut through the building.
I ended up getting onto West Street. I'm not sure
if I went through the towers or I went around the
back to the north cove and I came out on North End
Avenue. At that time, there was people on the
Vesey/West Street side and I paired up -- down on
the corner of West and Vesey, there was a lot of
rigs that were buried under the debris. I remember
the super satellite from Engine 9 was there, in
front of the 6 World Trade Center. There were
people climbing all over the place trying to get
into there and there were some fires. They looked
for surface victims and stuff.

I ran into some of the people from the first
battalion. There was Chief McKavanagh, and we
started trying to get water. We wanted water lines
down there to start water. I understand the boats
were in, so we managed to get rigs that were further
back towards Murray and Warren Street that were not
covered in debris. I remember Ladder 115's rig was
in the middle of the street on West Street by Vesey,
heading southbound, and that was covered in debris.
I managed to get an Engine out and we backed it down
the street, down through Murray, up around the back

Kelty, Jr.

on to North End Avenue and we brought it in on Vesey Street and parked it midway. We then had lines running from the boats, which was at the waterfront at the time. We ran lines down to supply the pumper, and then the pumper ran more lines down to supply the satellite, which was located down at the intersection of Liberty -- of Vesey and West. And we were trying to use that as a supply line to get any hand lines or even to get the super pumper up or the Vesey water satellite unit in service.

We then had another break in the block on West Street heading southbound that we were hooking into to try to boost the pressure up to get water into the satellite units so we could extinguish fires that were going on right now in 6 World Trade, which is the Federal building, the Customs building. We couldn't the get pressure up on it. It would only reach so much pressure and because it was 3-inch, 3-and-a-half-inch lines, we couldn't get enough water down there to provide the pressure to use the satellite gun. And that's where we spent most of the day, was just trying to attack the fires, put whatever we put out in the area.

There was units searching in 6 World Trade.

Kelty, Jr.

One World Trade we couldn't get near, because the bridge had collapsed on top of it. The north end bridge had collapsed on the street, blocking the whole street, and we were just -- there were units all over the place. People were all over the place. I didn't know who they were. Because at the time we had a problem with as far as determining who was who, because equipment was being borrowed from all firehouses.

And 7 World Trade was burning up at the time. We could see it. There was concern. I had gone up to take a look at it, because I knew that the telephone company building, which is 140 West Street, was next to 7 World Trade Center, and there was a concern that if 7 World Trade came down, what would happen to this building? We went in there, we checked it out. There were some people in there. We made them evacuate and I went in the back to see what was happening.

The fire at 7 World Trade was working its way from the front of the building northbound to the back of the building. There was no way there could be water put on it, because there was no water in the area. I went back and I reminded whoever the

Kelty, Jr.

chief was, I don't know if it was Chief McKavanagh or Chief Blaich, that with 7 World Trade Center in danger of collapsing, you had to be careful, because Con Edison had big transformers in the back that supplied the lower half of Manhattan. So we had to be concerned about electricity, that this may be energized or not be energized. We also reminded him about the telephone company, about the equipment that was in there.

After a while, what happened, my eyes started bothering me. I ended up getting taken over to St. Francis in Jersey by the water, had my eyes washed out and when I was coming back somewhere around I think it was 5:00 o'clock, 6:00 o'clock, 7 World Trade Center came down. We were in the water when it came down. It might have been earlier. It might have been 4. I don't know exactly when, but we were on the river coming back from New Jersey when the towers came down.

They were utilizing the north cove as a reference point for evacuation of all people over for hospitals and stuff. The Port Authority -- or police launches were there. They were bringing people across. They had a triage station set up

Kelty, Jr.

over there to flush the eyes or to handle whatever emergency was quick, and then they moved them over and then transported them out over to New Jersey. After pretty much the towers came down and there was some sense of no more collapse happening, Engine 10's quarters started to get used as a triage station and a general focal point.

Throughout the whole time Engine 10's quarters emergency generator was working we had some type of lighting system and some type of electricity. That's why they used it as a focal point. The EMS people were in there, they were triaging a lot of people. They were eye washing any emergencies, any civilians, any firemen. There was continued searches throughout the area. Again, the people I don't know, because helmets were being used by everybody, taken out of everybody's quarters. Partial equipment was worn. There were no face masks down there at the time, we had no breather masks. We were using whatever was handy, and I probably didn't get out of there until almost 1:30 in the morning, and which I stayed at the Fire Marshal's base with my brother. I finally touched bases with him. I stayed there and then we were

Kelty, Jr.
back again at 9:00 o'clock in the morning. That's
it.

Q. You mentioned Lieutenant O'Malley. You
may have mentioned it before. What unit is he in?

A. He's in Engine 10.

Q. Okay. And Captain --

A. Mallery. M-A-L-L-E-R-Y. He's the Captain
at Ladder 10.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. Good
interview. I thank you for the interview.
The time is now 10:58 hours and this is the
conclusion of the interview.

File No. 9110262

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM HOREL

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

W. HOREL

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 7, 2001. The time is 9:55 hours in the morning. This is Battalion Chief Ronald H. Kemly of the New York City Fire Department.

I am conducting an interview with the following individual: William Horel of Engine 64, Firefighter 6th Grade, of the New York City Fire Department.

The interview is being conducted at the quarters of Engine 64 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Horel, would you tell me what happened in the events of September 11?

A. Sure. We were assigned first to respond to 35 engine for the staging area and met there with several other engine companies, and we were told to respond to the site, so we drove down to the site, parked near Chambers and West.

Myself, Mike Ferrara, Vinnie Massa, Dave Moriarity and Lieutenant Steve O'Brien started to walk down West Street. We got to the corner of Vesey and West when the north tower started to collapse.

At that point, I turned north on West and dove behind an ambulance. When the dust cleared, we

W. HOREL

headed back towards looking for, you know, whatever we could do.

We weren't given any specific assignment until much later in the day when we did the primary search of the Verizon building from the 11th floor to the 20th Floor.

Don't really recall seeing any members of any other units going into the building, because we didn't get up right to where we could see the lobby or anything. We weren't that close before the collapse.

Q. Is that it? Do you have any other recollection?

A. Nothing.

Q. Okay. I'll ask you a few questions, and maybe it will help you out.

When you said you were told to respond, did anybody else respond with you? Any other companies?

A. From 35, yeah, there was probably five or six other engine companies. I remember 83, I remember 50. There was either 96 or 94, or maybe both of them. I'm not sure. I know 50 and 83 were there, and 35.

Q. Okay. Do you recall if they responded, they got there at the same time as you or --

A. We were actually the lead engine in the

W. HOREL

convoy, so we pulled in first, but they were all right behind us.

Q. Okay.

A. All right behind us.

Q. Do you recall if you reported in to anybody?

A. We were working our way towards what we thought was the command post near Vesey and West, but as soon as the collapse came, we never got to report in to anybody at that point.

Later on, there were smaller command posts set up all over that our officer checked in with, but...

Q. Okay. After you got there, like you said, the collapse occurred very shortly afterwards.

Did you happen to see -- maybe not companies. Did you happen to see any apparatus?

A. One apparatus I noticed was 12 truck, because I had a couple of friends working at 12 truck, so I knew they would be down there. I saw the rig, but no members.

Q. Okay. Where was that located?

A. Right around the corner of Vesey and West, right where we were, a little bit farther in.

Q. Okay. Was it intact or was it --

W. HOREL

A. It was intact. It wasn't damaged.

Q. And afterwards?

A. Yeah, after the collapse I noticed it.

Q. Okay.

A. So...

Q. Any other things you can recall? As far as
did you see any members?

A. We stretched line, I remember, to the water.
I guess it was, like, up to one of the boats, one of
the marine units.

Q. Right. That was after the collapse?

A. That was after the collapse.

Q. As you said, you hadn't seen any members or
anything before that?

A. No, not that I can recall.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay. This concludes
the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110265

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEVEN ALTINI

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today is Friday, December 7th, 2001. The time is 1615 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department, City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual: Steven Altini, firefighter first, assigned to Engine Company 24 of the Fire Department, City of New York. The interview is being conducted at the quarters of Engine 24 in the engine office, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Fireman Altini, would you please tell me what happened on September 11th.

A. Okay. Me and two other off-duty firefighters responded from home prior to the recall. We went over the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. Looking towards Manhattan, we could see the two towers, pretty heavy smoke rushing from the towers.

We responded through Brooklyn via the Gowanus Expressway. We were waved through the easy pass lane from PD as we showed our ID, who we were. We proceeded to go through the Battery Tunnel. We noticed no fire apparatus or

emergency vehicles as we went through, just some civilian vehicles.

As we exited the Battery Tunnel to lower Manhattan, we proceeded to make a right turn onto West Street where we were confronted with a lot of debris in the street, airplane debris, human remains and such.

We pulled our pickup truck just north of the Marriott at Carlisle Street on the east side of West Street, facing north. As we exited the vehicle, two other firefighters donned their protective gear and headed north towards tower two or one.

Me being in civilian clothes and no protective gear, I proceeded west across West Street to Commissioner Gregory and his aide and asked them where the off-duty firemen were going, and what I can do. I was instructed to either remain at the scene or proceed over to City Hall where the firefighters were now mustering up after the recall.

As I was there, I remember seeing Ladder 113, but there was no members there. This was between 9:30 and 10. I don't know the exact

time the second plane hit the tower, but that's exactly when we left Staten Island. It took us maybe about 20 minutes to get in.

I noticed an engine company -- I believe it was Engine 211 -- pull up. As they were getting out of the rig, I went over to the chauffeur and asked them if they had protective gear that I could borrow. Being the chauffeur was also suiting up, they had no extra gear.

With that I headed east across West Street and went through the Marriott at Carlisle Street, exiting the rear onto Washington Street, headed north one block, over east another block to Greenwich Street, where I met up with another fireman who was in full gear from Engine 249.

We proceeded north towards Engine 10, and we tried to enter their quarters through the rear basement entrance, which was locked. As we continued north on Greenwich Street towards the corner of Liberty and Greenwich is when tower two started to come down.

The only other apparatus I saw, that I remembered seeing on Liberty Street in front of tower two, I believe it was Ladder 15. The

number is not clear, but I thought it was Ladder 15. I may be mistaken. I confronted no personnel other than the one member from 249 at that point.

We found cover at the corner of Cedar and Greenwich Street as tower two was coming down, in a deli next to O'Hara's Restaurant. After it sounded like the tower was finished collapsing, we exited the deli and headed south one block, where we were separated, me and the fireman.

I met up with a fire cadet, Eddie Gonzalez, who sustained a broken left arm, I believe, and we got him to an ambulance maybe about 15 minutes, 20 minutes later. By that time tower one had already come down.

When he was taken away in the ambulance, I went around by Battery Park and back up West Street where there was a lot of firemen that weren't there earlier. I didn't see Commissioner Gregory or his aide. I didn't see any other members that I saw prior to the collapses. Just a lot of firemen from out of the borough I guess responded from the recall.

I gave Chief Mosier from the 8th Division some information about the two members that I came up to Manhattan with, because at this point I knew they were missing and I thought they were caught in the collapse of either one or two, tower one or tower two. I wasn't sure, because they didn't say where they were going.

Throughout the day I met many different personnel, and we continued to search and help stretch some hose line from the tugboats to supply tower ladders on West Street, and that was pretty much it.

Q. I'm just going to ask you a couple questions. That was pretty good.

When you say you went there with two other firemen, who were the others?

A. It was Craig Monahan from Ladder Company 5 and Joseph Rea from Engine Company 255.

Q. They had their gear with them?

A. Yes.

Q. When you were on West Street, you said you were on West Street and you met Commissioner Gregory.

A. Right.

Q. Where on West Street was he? Do you know what street?

A. Yeah, we were pretty much right between Liberty and Cedar, just south of the south walkway bridge, at the median in the divider. There was a separation in the divider, and he had his car and they were there, facing north.

Q. You mentioned 211, again on West Street. Do you know where on West Street? Is that the same location?

A. Same location. They pulled up, and the officer had come out and I believe he spoke to Commissioner Gregory. At that point I went over and spoke to the chauffeur as he was donning his gear.

Q. And the guy from 249, you don't recall his name?

A. No, I'm sorry.

Q. That's okay.

A. I was told his name a couple of times.

Q. Okay. Fine.

A. I don't remember.

Q. It would help, but that's fine.

And Ladder 15, you said they were on

West Street also on Liberty Street. Is that the overpass, the south overpass?

A. No, it looked like they were facing -- they were on the north side of Liberty Street facing east on a diagonal. I hate to speculate, but they may have come around by Battery Park and then up West Street and parked their rig in front of tower two. They weren't near tower one.

Q. No, but the overpass on Liberty Street, the south walkway.

A. Right.

Q. Were they near that?

A. They were just north of that and east.

Q. Okay. If you don't have anything else, that concludes the interview. Thank you very much.

A. Thank you.

File No. 9110266

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ROBERT BYRNE

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 7th, 2001. The time is 1645 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Firefighter 6th grade Robert Byrne, assigned to Engine Company 24 of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine 24, in the company office, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Fireman Byrne, would you please tell me what happened on September 11th.

A. September 11th I arrived for work early to do my probationary firefighter duties so I was square with everything. When we got the call to go, I was able to -- I had to beg the nozzle man to let me take up on him, which I did. The call came in around 8:46, so we responded immediately. So I had the knob.

En route to the World Trade Center, it was myself as the nozzle man, Marcel Claes was the backup, Dan Sterling was the doorman, and

Rich Billy had control, Lieutenant Hanson was my officer and John Ottrando was our chauffeur.

While going to the Trade Center, I'm really doing my size-up and saying, oh, my God, there's like ten floors missing. Everything is blowing out fire. I remember looking how high it is and saying, oh, my God, how are we going to get up there with all of our equipment.

We parked on, I'm pretty sure it was the West Side Highway by Vesey. I'm almost sure it was over in that area. I remember John parked the rig. We headed to the north tower at that time.

When we were going there, I remember seeing debris and whatnot falling. When we got to the staging area inside the lobby, I remember seeing other companies. I remember vividly seeing it looked like the core elevators of the building were blown apart as if a giant had punched through tinfoil.

I remember seeing some bodies. I remember looking out into the courtyard and seeing some mutilated bodies. Debris was everywhere. I remember we were just waiting for

our assignment.

From there we headed up, I believe it was behind Ladder 20, and we headed up to the staircase A. We got as far as, I'd say, the 13th floor initially. We had to take our first blow because we were carrying a lot of equipment.

There were civilians jamming the staircase. There was water flowing down the staircase; I remember that. People saying, "Thank you, guys." I remember another unit behind us. I don't remember what company they were with. One of the senior guys was saying basically, "You're almost there, folks. You're almost there." Then I started joking around with the people. I said, "Yeah, all this for 32 grand." People thought it was funny. That was my way of trying to make them feel better, tell them a joke.

On the 13th floor we took a break. I remember hearing radio calls then, by other units, some maydays, members down with chest pains. I don't know what floors they were on.

I kept going up. I remember seeing people coming down in the stairs. We had to make

way for a couple of people that had their skin hanging off their bodies, basically. They were pretty burnt up.

I don't remember what floor it was, but we were with a woman who had an asthma attack and a man was helping her down. We were trying to help her. We didn't have too much CFR stuff with us, but some EMT I guess it was -- popped out of nowhere. He had an oxygen tank with no proper rebreather mask, but he was able to give her a little air.

To make a long story short, she was able to get out because she decided not to stay and wait for EMS to help her out. She just got out. She got out of the building.

It was around the 29th floor, I think it was, that we decided to take some of our gear off in order to make it up to the 80th floor. Then we moved up to I think it was the 29th floor. I don't remember what other units were up there. Like I was saying, we were going to take some gear off, leave a few of the hose lengths. We carried a lot of gear up, and it was almost impossible to make it up that high anyway.

That's where we left Rich Billy to be communications relay, basically, because communications were pretty poor in the staircase. Personally I didn't hear a lot of radio transmissions.

I remember going to I believe it was the 35th floor we got to, and that's where we ran into 5 Truck, our guys. They saw us. We came into the hallway, and we were pooped. They came over and offered us water. We took a blow there for a little bit.

I remember somebody had gotten into a water dispenser, and we took Poland Spring bottles. I think it was Andy Brunn that got into it. We were giving them out to civilians on their way down.

I remember later on we went up to -- I don't know if it was still on the 35th floor and that's when we all dove into the staircase because basically the whole tower shook and we heard the noise of something going on. We didn't know what it was.

What it was was the south tower collapsing. We didn't know. Finally we got some

sort of transmission on the radio saying there was a collapse on the 60th floor. Meanwhile the south tower happened to come down.

We were still on a rest period. We started going back. We were supposed to meet up with another unit; I don't remember who it was. We made it as far as, I believe it was the 37th floor, and I believe it was a chief from the 11th Battalion that popped up on the staircase. His exact words were "Drop everything and get out." We looked to Lieutenant Hanson, and he said, "Drop everything and get out." That's when we basically evacuated.

I remember going up the stairs took us over the hour. Getting down the stairs took maybe ten minutes, not even. By that time the staircase was empty. The same staircase we took up was empty on the way down.

We got as far as I believe the 10th floor, 10th or 15th -- I'm not a hundred percent sure -- and we knew something was bad at that time anyway.

There was a radio transmission for -- they needed help. Lieutenant Hanson told me to

get out because my -- when the chief told me to drop everything, because I'm a proby, I followed orders to the T, I guess, and I dropped everything, except for my bunker gear, of course. But I dropped my Scott tank and everything. When I got down to that floor, he said, "All right, Byrne, you don't have your face piece. Just get out of the building."

Basically, I got as far as the third floor, where I ran into -- it looked like there was a collapse down there. It was pretty bad. It was all smoky and dusty. I thought it was smoke, and I got a little nervous. I was at the point where I was going to go up and get another Scott tank, but I realized it wasn't smoke.

That's when I saw it was a collapse. It looked like a collapse; either that or the collapse and just closed up the staircase, I think it was the second floor, third or second floor, whatever it was. That's where I ran into a Port Authority cop, and he directed me out.

It was a good thing I had my flashlight on still, because it was pitch-black. I followed a pitch-black hallway, and that's where I ran

into a group of civilians. When we got to the point, I think it was the lobby, and that's where we had -- we had a little overhead protection there, and then we had to run across to the next overhead protection it was about a 75 foot run. There were jumpers and debris that was falling. We had to pretty much take our chance when we made the run.

Before that I remember running into another guy in my probationary class, Jimmy Brown. He was with 10-10. He was saying he doesn't know where everybody is. To make a long story short with Jimmy Brown, he ended up living but he got buried up to his shoulders. They had to dig him out before he suffocated.

I remember making the mad dash, praying I wasn't going to get hit. I took a peek up. I saw it looked clear to me, and I ran. I was under another bit of overhead protection, but it wasn't really that good a protection because the aluminum was just coming down from that building. It was just going through that thick plate glass like a hot knife through butter. There were bodies littering the courtyard. Everything was

on fire.

So I was by myself with 20 civilians, I guess. I was the only fireman. The whole line stopped because we had to stay in a single column to keep the overhead protection. I didn't understand why the column stopped. I was worried. I was like, why is this thing stopping?

So I went around to the front, and that's when I found this big lady and she couldn't walk. Basically I was like, "Lady, you've got to get up. You're going to kill everybody." She said, "No, just leave me here." So we couldn't do that of course. I tried to help carry her, but I was just so exhausted. She wouldn't give any effort whatsoever to get up. I told her I have to go get a straight board.

Right around the corner of the building, maybe 20 feet, 30 feet, I found a couple of ESU cops. With them two and myself, we were able to get her as far as Church and Vesey on the courtyard still. We're not in the street level; we're still right next to the building.

I think there was another cop that came over with a straight board. We strapped her in,

we took her down the stairs, and that's when the building came down. We were about 150 feet away when the building came down.

I remember when the building came down I couldn't believe it, because I didn't even know the other one came down yet, because we were never told. We were told it was a collapse above the 60th floor.

What's that, Chief? I'm sorry.

All of a sudden the lady was able to get up and walk fine. That was good. At least she lived. Because I didn't have a mask, I inhaled quite a bit of that stuff. It went in my eyes, everything.

I remember walking into, I think it was towards Vesey, and I saw somebody in the middle of the street and said, "Who are you? "I don't know if I said, "Who are you?" I just remember looking. I kept on walking towards the only person I saw. It turned out to be Lieutenant Hanson. He barely got out too.

Together him and I were able to walk a block or half a block through all that debris. The debris was burning. We got help from a group

of maintenance guys in a building. They were able to wash our faces for us with a five gallon jug. From there we got over to 7 and 1 somehow.

That's about it.

Q. Okay. Thank you. I have some questions just to clarify stuff.

A. Sure.

Q. That was a good job there.

The first question, you said there were other companies that you saw on the way, but you don't remember their numbers? When you got to Vesey and West, you started walking. These other companies, you didn't take any notice?

A. When I was going in or out?

Q. Going in, walking towards the north tower. You reported to the lobby command post, probably, but do you know who the chief was at the lobby command post?

A. Yeah, I remember seeing Chief Hayden.

Q. All right, Chief Hayden.

A. Because I remember there was a firefighter from this house. I think it was 5 Truck. I remember seeing him around here before that, and he was setting up the table, the

command table they use. I remember him knocking it down. That's what drew my attention to see Chief Hayden.

Q. All right. So that was the aide probably of the division.

A. Right.

Q. So that was Division 1 was there already.

But you didn't see any other companies like in the lobby, the numbers, any numbers?

A. I remember seeing 5 Truck too.

Q. You don't know where he directed him to?

A. No.

Q. You went up the stairs with Ladder 20?

A. Yes. They were leading us.

Q. No other companies came down or up while you were working that staircase?

A. We were passing companies.

Q. But you didn't take notice of their numbers?

A. I didn't take notice. It was my first job, basically.

Q. Okay.

You said you didn't hear much on the radio. Did you have a radio?

A. I did not, but I was close enough to listen.

Q. That's fine.

The 11th Battalion, the chief you saw, you said you believe it was the 11th?

A. Right.

Q. Did you see anybody with him? Was his aide with him?

A. No, he was by himself.

Q. He was by himself. All right.

And you met 5 Truck on, what did you say, the 35th?

A. The 35th floor, I believe it was.

Q. When you were coming down, did you see any other Fire Department units or any apparatus when you came out?

A. When I came out there was an engine. I forgot the number.

Q. It was probably crushed; right?

A. No.

Q. It was in good shape?

A. It was in good shape after the building

collapsed.

Q. You came out of the lobby on the Church Street side. Is that what you said? I believe you said that.

A. Yeah, either that or I came out another way. I had to go around the building.

Q. That's when you saw the engine, when you first came out?

A. After the building came down I saw the engine, because I went to look for a Scott tank.

Q. When you saw this fellow Jim Brown, was he in the lobby? Outside?

A. I'm pretty sure he was in the lobby. I thought he was just right outside the lobby. Just before the mad dash.

There was something else I missed, I wanted to tell.

Q. Okay. If you can remember something else, go ahead. There's no rush.

A. I just forgot it.

Q. There's no rush.

A. Sorry. Thinking about this bugs you out.

Q. No, we're just trying to find out if

you saw the units --

A. Oh, okay, I remember now. I remember exactly. I remember 5 Truck telling us that they got up staircase B because it was empty of civilians, because we were telling them how we were packed with civilians. They told us to take B with them, and we ended up just staying in A. That is what I remembered.

Q. Okay. If there's nothing else, that concludes the interview. Thank you very much.

A. Thank you, Chief.

Q. Okay.

File No. 9110267

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD MASSA

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 7th, 2001. The time is 10:20 in the morning. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Richard Massa of Engine 64, firefighter first grade. The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine 64 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Massa, please tell me what happened in your own words on September 11th.

A. I was chauffeuring for 64 Engine, and we responded to the World Trade Center from a command post on 125th Street and Third Avenue. We went down there with about four other engine companies. We went down there together.

On the way down we heard reports of the first building collapsing, and we heard on the dispatch system of people being trapped. I remember one instance, there was a guy giving a mayday from inside one of the apparatuses, of being trapped inside there. It was hard to believe what we were hearing.

Heading down the West Side Highway, I

went down West Street as far as I could go, which was on West and Eighth, West Street and Eighth Street. I think it was called Eighth. I went down as far as I could. There were apparatus backing up all the way on West Street. So that's as far down as I believe I was able to go.

Looking down to the World Trade Center, I saw just really a puff of smoke where the north tower would have been. I still found it hard to believe that it was actually collapsed. I thought maybe it was just hidden behind the smoke.

When I got out, I started getting on my gear to go down with my men. I realized that I had no mask, because the chauffeur's mask was being used by one of the firemen whose mask was out of service. So I reported to my officer that I had no mask. He said to hang back.

What I started doing right away was I remember seeing one other chauffeur that was back there with me. I didn't know who he was. We started moving the rigs over to one side, because all of West Street was blocked up. We figured if anybody needed to get by -- I don't know if there

was an order given for us to start doing that or not, but I was kind of seeing to it myself. I thought at least I could be doing something. I could be moving the apparatus over.

I started moving a bunch of engines and trucks over to the side. While I was doing that, the north tower, the second tower to collapse, collapsed. I watched that and backed up a little bit from the smoke. It was really out of reach from me. It was hard to tell at the time how far it was going to go. But after that I continued moving apparatus over to one side.

So from then when I lost my men, I never met up with them until the evening time after 6:00 o'clock. We got down there between five and ten minutes before the second building collapsed.

After that, after moving over the rigs to the side, someone was going around with wheel barrows collecting tools and anything that might be important for down at the site. So I went to a few apparatuses and looked for maybe halogens or whatever they were looking for, extra masks, to be brought down there, then setting up

hospitals after that, just trying to set up or help out with what I could at the time.

I went looking for my company a few times, trying to head down as close as I could to the Trade Center. There was always a lot of people around. I know I met up with 94 Engine for quite a while, from my battalion, and I knew them pretty well. I hung out with them. We were at a command post at the time, and we were told to hang back while Seven World Trade was on fire and they were afraid of collapse.

That's really pretty much how I spent my day, trying to help set up what I could with the hospitals or with equipment. I spent a lot of time trying to look for my men. I tried to listen by radio if I could hear where they may be, but I never found them until after 6:00.

I really didn't get too close to the buildings to really see anything that happened. I was pretty much always a few blocks away.

If there's anything else that would be important that I could tell you -- I didn't report to any command post on my own.

Q. Okay. I've got a couple questions.

When you said you got to Eighth Street, you said you heard a mayday on the department radio. Do you recall who gave it?

A. No, I don't. The fireman gave his name. I'm not even sure. But I know he was stuck in an apparatus.

Q. He didn't say what company?

A. He probably did. More than likely he did, because I remember the dispatcher asking, "Calm down and try to give the location where you were." I remember hearing him saying that he was running out of air. I was looking at my officer. We were looking at each other like we couldn't believe what we were hearing.

No, I don't remember his name or what unit he was from.

Q. When you say another chauffeur and yourself were moving rigs, apparatus, did you happen to know what company he was from?

A. No. I didn't know who he was. I didn't recognize him.

Q. Do you remember any of the company numbers of the apparatus you were moving?

A. I really didn't pay attention.

Q. The same thing happened when you took the tools, you were putting the tools in, you don't remember company numbers?

A. There wasn't any tools that were taken. But no, I really wasn't looking. I probably knew at the time but didn't try to remember.

Q. When you were moving the apparatus, you were getting closer to the buildings?

A. No, I was just moving to the side.

Q. This is all the way up by Eighth Street?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. When you say you hooked up with 94, that was after the collapses?

A. That was after the collapses.

Q. Okay. Unless you can think of something else, that will be the end of the interview.

A. No, I remember helping a few civilians that were walking, back around that time after I was moving the rigs, with oxygen. Some of them I guess had difficulty breathing. So I used mine from 64 Engine, my oxygen, to help civilians.

I remember one woman in particular, she

took some oxygen for a few minutes, said thank you and then I put the stuff back and started to head down to hook up with some of my men. I don't remember helping anybody else besides that one woman.

There's nothing else I can think of as far as incidents like that as far as helping any civilians coming by. There were some around there. There were some firemen back with me that I know were helping people that were coming back that needed maybe some oxygen.

Type of tools or what engine or truck companies are gone from me.

Q. Do you have anything else?

A. I don't think so.

Q. Okay. That concludes the interview.

Thank you.

File No. 9110269

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEPHEN ELLIS

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

S. ELLIS

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today is the 7th of December, 2001. The time is 4:06 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER ELLIS: Firefighter Ellis, Engine 239, Firefighter First Grade.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: This is in regard to the events that occurred on September 11th, 2001.

Q. Steve, if you could, just tell us in your own words what you saw on that day.

A. Well, we responded through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. We drove up West Street. I was in search of a hydrant. We proceeded past both towers going north on West Street, and I finally came across a hydrant at the corner of West and Barclay.

I tested the hydrant. We hooked up. We had water. Soon thereafter I found out that Engine 24, which was located on Vesey Street and West Street, needed to be augmented. So myself, Firefighter Brown, Firefighter Martin and Firefighter Wheeler had stretched three-inch line from my rig down West Street from Barclay to Vesey and hooked into Engine 24's rig, and I had then gone back to my rig and started water and augmented them.

S. ELLIS

Other than that, I was not in any of the towers. I was there when the towers did collapse and me and the rest of the members had gotten caught in the huge dust cloud. That's about all I can tell you as the chauffeur. The other members were, I understand, going towards Tower 1 at the time, after they had helped me stretch the three-inch hose to 24's engine. That's about all I can say.

Q. So from the position you were in, did you see the tower go down?

A. Yes. I saw the second tower, not the first tower, the second tower go down.

Q. Did you see any units, where they were, or any units that were involved in the collapse or the identity of any people that you saw?

A. No. All I saw was 24's rig when I was supplying them and going back to my rig. In the immediate vicinity of the tower, I didn't see any other rigs. Back by where I was parked on Barclay, I saw Engine 235's rig. But in the immediate vicinity of the towers, I didn't see anybody else's rig that I can remember besides 24. I was concentrating on supplying them.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Great. That

S. ELLIS

concludes the interview. Thanks, Steve. It's 4:10
p.m.

File No. 9110270

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM WHEELER

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Wheeler

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 7, 2001. The time is 4:52 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with William Wheeler of Engine 239 in regard to the events of September 11, 2001.

Bill, if you would, tell us in your own words what you saw that day.

A. We went through the tunnel, responded through the tunnel, we went up to the West Side Highway. There was people all over the ground, debris and whatnot. We stopped in front of the building and dropped this guy off -- I'm not sure who it was -- and proceeded past the building down to, I think -- I'm not sure what street it is. Warren Street or Murray Street, one of them. We found a hydrant, stretched a 3 and a half inch line off the back of the rig to 24 Engine who was parked on the corner of Vesey and West Street, West Side Highway.

I went back to the Engine back on Warren Street, I think, took my roll-ups, live saving rope

Wheeler

and whatever else, other tools, went back up to the command post in front of 2 World -- the World Financial Center.

The building then fell down. We ran back towards underneath the pedestrian bridge on the West Side Highway, the north one, and stayed there for a period of time. Then I was told by someone, the Captain I believe it was, to go get a hand line and stretch it into the basement of the World Financial Center. I went back to do that. I stopped to wash my eyes out and whatever.

The other building started falling. I ran into a building on the corner of Warren Street and stayed there for a while. I came back out, went back to the rig. Then we went over to see if there was a hydrant. 54 Engine was across the street from us. We went, hooked it off the hydrant and started working the gun on the top to see if we could get the car fires out that were in the parking lot across the street. But then they told us to shut it off because there was no water pressure. They were going to move a hand line in.

Then I went back and we reconnected our 3 and a half that we had stretched to Engine 24 originally,

Wheeler

because it was covered in the collapse. We went to stretch some more of it and got that all done, and that's about it.

Q. When you said earlier that the building fell down, that was the first building? The south tower?

A. The south tower. That was the first.

Q. When you were on West Street stretching lines, did you notice any units or the identity of any people over there?

A. The only one I saw, 5 Truck was outside of 6 World Trade Center, the Customs building, with a ladder up. I don't know. There was a tower ladder out behind it. I believe it was 12. I'm not sure.

I saw 54 Engine across the street, I saw 2 Truck on the West Side Highway facing underneath the pedestrian bridge. Let's see. There is not that much more I remember seeing.

I saw 131 Truck when we first pulled up. I saw 131 get out of their truck. I saw 122 Truck when we first pulled up, I saw them get out of their truck. I saw the chauffeur for 16 Engine. I talked to him, because I used to work there. And he was asking me -- he was trying to back out of a block. He

Wheeler

asked me how far he could stretch a 3 and a half and I really didn't know. I couldn't help him. I was doing something.

And I saw the chauffeur of 235 after the collapses asking where his company was, and I saw 231's rig was around the corner from our rig, and I saw their chauffeur. I didn't see any of their guys. And there was a guy that was with us the whole time. I don't know where that guy was from though. He was with us. Like we used him to untangle search ropes and stuff in the building, after the second building fell. I don't know if he was from Rescue or where he was from. He just came out of the basement of the building and he was like "Uhhh" and I don't know.

I think that's about it.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Thanks,
Bill.

The time is 4:56. That's the end of
the interview.

File No. 9110272

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PETER BROWN

Interview Date: December 7, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Burns

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 7, 2001. The time is 4:30 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with Peter Brown, firefighter from Engine 239 in regard to the events of September 11, 2001.

If you would, Peter, just tell us in your own words what happened on that day.

A. My name is Peter Brown, Firefighter First Grade, Engine 239. We were sent on, I guess, a second alarm. We staged at the mouth of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. While we were there, the second plane hit. We got the word to go to the tower and proceeded through the tunnel. There was some traffic in the tunnel and Steve Siller from Squad 1 jumped on the rig. We proceeded through the tunnel. Steve Siller jumped out on Liberty and West Street.

We proceeded past the two towers up to Barclay, looked around. The rig faced south, we grabbed a hydrant and we started to stretch the 3 and a half back to Engine 24. They had water problems. We

Burns

hooked up the 3 and a half, stretched it to like 6 lengths off us, hooked up, pulled some lengths off of them, put them all together, augmented them, hooked into 6 World Trade Center, into the sprinkler system, went back to our rig, got some -- put our masks on, I grabbed a cylinder and a personal search rope and we started heading back south again on West Street.

All this time there were people jumping from the building so we walked in the middle of the street. We walked as a unit down the street and the Lieutenant, I think, saw Chief Feehan and he said proceed to the staging area. As we were walking, the south tower started to collapse. The command said the south tower was coming down. We looked up, we saw the tower coming down. We ran back north, hid under the north pedestrian bridge behind -- I hid behind Ladder 3, and the dust clouds, debris cloud blew by us and hung around a while. It was pretty dark. We sort of thought we were buried underneath the bridge.

It was me, Kevin Martin and another guy was there who I thought was a Lieutenant, but I found out -- he was coughing. I helped him buddy-breathe and

Burns

then he said he needed water so we ran around the side of the truck and got a can. I hit him in the mouth with the can a little bit to get some of the dirt and garbage out of his mouth. Finally the air cleared and we realized we weren't buried under debris and we regrouped. We got everybody together and Lieutenant Mancuso said, "Let's get out of here. This one's gonna come down." He said, "Get everybody together" and we went back to our rig. It was pretty much debris in our eyes and in our mouths.

We went back to the rig and sort of took off my mask and I had dropped some tools while we were running. I guess the cylinder and the rope I had. While we were there -- I was on Barclay, sort of went around to this other building there. It was, I think, the DC37 building, DC 10. Something like that. And while we were in there we went to the bathroom to wash up, get the stuff out of our eyes, the second building came down. After that it was pretty much an operation from a distance, I guess. We didn't get in too close. We stretched a few lines. There was cars on fire across the street in the parking lot. We stretched some lines and put

Burns

them out and we did a variety of minor things.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay that's it.

That concludes our interview. The time is

4:34 p.m.

File No. 9110277

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ARTHUR RICCIO

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 10th, 2001. The time is 1718 hours. This is Battalion Chief Steven King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter Arthur Riccio from Ladder Company 119. He was on overtime as a chauffeur in Ladder 110 on September 11th.

This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Artie, you can start whenever you want.

A. I came down Liberty Street. When I got to Church Street, the second plane hit. We didn't know it was a plane; we thought it was helicopters going around. I thought a helicopter went into it.

I stopped there. People were running at us. It was like a movie. The lieutenant was saying, "Back up, back up. Get out of here." I stopped. I had people running all around me. The women were losing their shoes. One woman lost a pocketbook. We took the pocketbook, threw it in the rig, and we gave it back to her about three days later. She got her pocketbook back.

I backed out. I went down Broadway. I came back around and wound up in the same spot, Liberty and Church. I went up to Vesey Street. I parked the rig on Church Street. We walked down Vesey Street, and it was like total silence, nothing. It was eerie. There were police cars all parked on angles, metal going through their hoods. There was a tire of a plane on top of one.

We walked down Vesey, went into the lobby. Battalion 11 came to us and said we have people trapped on the 31st floor. In the lobby was the Commissioner, Ganci, the Mayor was there, Father Judge was there.

We walked around to the A staircase. The A staircase was loaded with people. We couldn't even get in there. Battalion 11, I don't know who it was, he came around and said, "You know what, this elevator here goes to 16. Let's take the elevator." We asked, "Chief, do you want to take the elevator?" He said, "Yeah, come on, let's go. If only goes to 16, there will be no problem."

So we took it, went to 16. We got out

and went into C staircase. As we started walking up, we were telling civilians to go to the left and we were going to the right. We walked up and got to 21. 21 was locked. Chief said, "Maybe another floor is open. Let's go up." We got to 28.

I was behind the chief. I said, "Chief, this is 21. Where are we going?" He said, "You know what, let's go back down and force the door." We went back down to 21, forced the door, we go in and searched all the occupancies. Nobody was in there.

It was a little hazy. The bathrooms were charred. I had to use my mask to look in the stalls and make sure no one was in there. I came out. It was like a horseshoe. The last office, I was in there with Lieutenant Meara to and this kid Mike, a proby.

All of a sudden we felt wind hitting us in the face. We thought fire was coming in. Every door we went through, we broke the locks so it wouldn't lock behind us. As we go through a door, we would hold the door closed. We would lay on the floor with our feet on the door,

holding it.

I think 55 Engine was hooked up, and they asked, "Where's the fire? Where's the fire?" No fire. Paulie Howard was saying the whole building shook. I was laying on the floor saying, "Come on, this building -- it's got to shake. Everybody was swaying." He said, "No, this building's going down." I said to him, "There was a bomb in the basement. It's not going to go down."

Every window was broken. There was smoke coming down the hall, and I was just in that office. I said, "You know what, I'll go back in there. I know the layout." I go back in, and the proby came with me. We went on the whole outside. Every window was broken. All the blinds were burnt. It was smoky. So we came back out.

55 Engine said, "You need a line?" I said, "There's no fire in there. I don't know what it is. I don't know what happened." We didn't know the building went down next to us.

We passed the C staircase and got to the B staircase. We were standing right there,

and a chief, whoever he is, he saved our lives. He was yelling, "Get out now. Get out." So we started walking down. We were lucky we were in the B staircase. They told us that the B staircase was the only one that went out, the only one that wasn't blocked with rubble.

On about 18 I saw two civilians trying to get a lady -- she must have had arthritis because her hands were bent. They were permanently like this. So I said, "Come on, we'll throw her in a chair." We put her in a chair, and I took the back and a civilian took the front. Actually another civilian took my halogen, and we walked down. The rest of 110 was behind me.

We walked down. I don't even remember going down. They told me it was stop and go. It was real slow going down. I was kidding with her. She was crying. I was telling her, "Don't worry, Uncle Artie's got you. We're going to get out of here. No problem."

When we got down to the lobby, it was like a bomb hit it. I looked around and said, oh, my God, every window is busted. I was shaky.

My arms were shaking. I was totally exhausted. I looked for an ambulance, got her into an ambulance, and I sat down in front of the building on West Street. I was sitting there and I thought, my God, I can't move.

Another chief, another guy who saved my life -- I don't know who he was -- he kept on telling me, "Go north, go north. Get out of here now." So we started walking up West Street. I don't know even know how far we got. A block? I know we walked under the first walkway, overpass. I think we might have just got past there.

The guy said to me, "Run!" I turned around, and it was a tidal wave of black coming down on top of us. I couldn't run. I was done. I knew that a two and a half foot wall in the street was next to me. I couldn't see it, so I just rolled to it. I tucked, I hit. I couldn't put my mask on. I couldn't breathe. I was pulling cement out of my mouth.

I finally found my mask and put my face piece on. It was full of cement. I must have laid there for five minutes, ten minutes, in total darkness. The next thing I knew -- I was

totally at peace, I swear to God. I think all our guys that died, they felt the way I felt. I was ready. Total calmness came over me. It was unbelievable.

The next thing I know, a guy from 122 -- I couldn't see his face in front of my eyes. The way you can't open your eyes in the morning like this. I had so much dust -- you know the dust out there.

Q. Sure.

A. You couldn't open your eyes. I just saw 122. The guy's lifting me up. He walked me out.

After a while, a couple hours, I guess, they went to start searching subways. We regrouped and got saws together and were cutting gates of subways and going down. They were totally collapsed.

I did see in the lobby, though, a friend of mine, John Crisci, as I was walking in. He was from hazmat. They just got there behind us. I thought they were getting assigned behind us. He died. They said they found him between the two towers, so they must have sent him over

to go into the south tower.

I think the people jumping was probably my -- they were hitting the atrium as we were going in.

Q. (Inaudible.)

A. Yeah. We had a proby. I told the guy, "Don't look up. Just put your head down and let's go."

I know Mike said he felt the whole building shake. We regrouped afterwards. I don't know if Mike ran into a building through a glass door or something. Another kid Mike, the proby, he ran into the back of an ambulance. The ambulance was open.

Over the Brooklyn Bridge, you saw black coming down the side of the building. It was like drippings. I said, "Lieutenant, what are those windows, plastic? What's melted on them? It looks like plastic going down the side of the building." They said it was the jet fuel coming down the side.

Otherwise seeing anybody, that's pretty much it.

Q. That's terrific.

CHIEF KING: The time is 1727 hours,
and this interview is concluded.

File No. 9110278

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER LANCE LIZZUL

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: It's December 10th, 2001. The time is 5:18 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the New York City Fire Department Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Lance Lizzul of Engine 47 in the quarters of Engine 47.

Q. Lance, just relate to us anything you saw on September 11th.

A. When the first plane hit, we heard the alarms come in. Watching the TV, we saw the second plane hit. They transmitted the second fifth, and they sent us down.

We came all the way down West Street and parked the rig I guess around Warren Street, and we started walking up the block. I was the chauffeur. The rest of the members of the company got together, and they started walking.

I hooked up with another chauffeur. We walked towards the Trade Center, and there was a rig on the corner that was hooked up, and he was fine. So we started walking towards the Trade Center and actually stopped because of all the jumpers and walked across West Street in front

of, it looks like the Winter Garden, with the atrium there. We were standing by the command center, watching what was going on. Some of these jumpers, I didn't look.

After a while just standing there, waiting to see what was going on, we heard some bangs. That made us look up, and that's when the first Trade Center came down. We ran through that building and past the atrium and came out on Vesey and walked back up to West, helping people as we could all along.

We just couldn't see anything. So we waited a little while until it cleared. We stayed on the corner. The chief started chasing everybody back north, and we started moving back. Then we heard the rumbling from the second one and just turned around and ended up staying all the way down north for most of the next couple hours.

Q. The building that you ran through after the first collapse, which building was that?

A. That was one of the Battery Park buildings. It was just a building.

Q. This is all interconnected.

A. Okay. Right. We ran right through the command center, it was on the ramp going down, and then the walkway was right next to that that went into the building where the atrium was. We ran through that building along the side, along the side of the atrium, and out the side door and came out on Vesey. There were people all over the place on Vesey.

Then when we came out, we walked up Vesey Street. The radios were silent. There was no talking on the radios. Then I got to the corner of Vesey and West, and the radio communications started again. I heard Engine 74 giving maydays. I know with 74 there was 22 and 13 and they were all in the same building, 22 and 13, 74 and us.

Q. Which building?

A. It was supposed to be in the second one. We ended up, I believe, in the first one. By mistake someone took them there. I met our control man, and then I saw him a little bit. I walked down the block a little bit. He kept going. I stopped and was just staring at the building. I heard the rumbling of the second

one, and it just came down and I just started running again.

That's pretty much it.

Q. Thank you very much for your help, Lance?

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 5:26 p.m., and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110280

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM CHESNEY

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 10th, 2001. The time is 10:20 a.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER CHESNEY: Firefighter First Grade William Chesney assigned to Engine Company 309.

CHIEF BURNS: This is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Bill, if you would, just tell me in your own words what happened that day.

A. Okay. We were assigned to relocate Engine 309 to 33 Engine in Manhattan. That would be after the first tower had fallen. After coming over the Manhattan Bridge into Manhattan, we were notified by the dispatcher to I believe the Deutsche Bank, which had I believe been set afire or there was a collapse there. I'm not sure what the assignment was. I'm fuzzy on that.

We proceeded to the West Side Highway. We made it up to Liberty next to the second World Trade Center before it fell. We didn't exit the engine. It was still running at the time. We

heard popping, people, crowd, screaming. The first tower had already fallen, so everything was very unclear due to visibility, bad visibility, because of smoke and ash.

We visually saw the beginning of the first tower crumble, so the engine turned off on Liberty and made its way over to Albany Street. The tower had fallen. Our engine company then exited the engine and proceeded over and attempted to help out in any way they could with civilians or Fire Department personnel who needed assistance. Then we had other companies join us that were scattered.

There was no water pressure downtown at the time. It took a while for water to get to the fires, Marine 2. We were down by Liberty close to the water by Gateway Plaza. We were assigned to put a fire out on the eighth or ninth floor of Gateway at the time. We went up there with hoses. We were drafting water from Marine 2 from a three and a half.

After that fire was out, we then proceeded to put out additional pockets of fire close to second World Trade. I believe it was

adjacent to the Vista Hotel and three World Trade.

For the rest of the day all we did was assist rescue operations, basically. That's basically the fundamentals of what happened.

Q. Did your unit get there prior to the second tower collapsing?

A. Yes, we did, yes.

Q. Where were you when the second tower collapsed?

A. I'm believing that we actually made it over towards the pedestrian bridge close to Liberty off the West Side Highway, because I believe the Deutsche Bank is adjacent to the second world tower or a block off. I'm not positive. That's where our assignment was.

Q. When you guys got there, did you see anyone or any companies that you can identify?

A. No. Due to the poor visibility, it was very tough to see in front of your face. With the smoke down there, the ash, it was very difficult to see anything. Basically I just saw through the fog on my end -- I'm not speaking for anybody else -- was first and last of the clouds

there were people running here and there.

There was no sense of direction. There was no way to know what anybody else was doing, so we just kept ourselves together and kept a level head and just tried to make the best of the situation, help out any way we could. That was it.

Q. Okay. Great.

CHIEF BURNS: That concludes the interview. It's 10:25 a.m.

File No. 9110281

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEVEN WRIGHT

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

S. WRIGHT

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 10th, 2001. The time is 12:18 and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan, Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Steven Wright of Ladder 16.

Q. Steve, please give us anything you have about the events on September 11th.

A. Sure. Okay. I remember being in quarters here when somebody said a plane crashed at the World Trade Center. We turned on the TV. We saw the hole in the building. We thought it was just somebody, a bad driver, a bad airplane driver or something went wrong. As we watched and we saw the second one hit the building, that's when we knew, we figured, everybody thought it was a terror assault. We had a bad feeling about this. So now the second plane hit and we get called, I think, on the fifth alarm for the second building.

So we leave quarters. We go down. We're following 13, I guess, 22 and the 10th Battalion now. We get down West Street. We see all the smoke. When we report there, we park about, I guess, two blocks north of the walkway on West Street and we start walking down. There was a guy from 35 Truck, Shea. He

S. WRIGHT

borrowed one of our masks. I remember that.

As we're walking down, we're watching. We see people jumping from the north building as we're walking under the overpass, the walkway. Then we reported to the staging area, which was directly across from the north tower, which was 2 World Financial Center, the Merrill Lynch Building. We were standing in the staging area at the apron of a loading dock that went underneath that building. The engine company was on the north side of the ramp. The truck company was on the south side of the ramp directly across from the north tower. They started upping it and about 20 feet was the ouija board, as they call it. Anyway, I remember standing there looking up and looking at the flames, seeing people jump. Again, it was about 20 people that jumped while we were standing there. I remember being told as we were walking down there may be a report of a third plane coming in, and I didn't hear anything else about that.

So they gave some assignments to engine companies and truck companies. 13 was the truck company directly ahead of us. They got the last assignment. I'm not sure which building they went into. But 16 was the last truck company there and we

S. WRIGHT

were waiting for the assignment. I remember standing like two, three feet away from the overhead doors that were open in that loading dock, and I had my bunker gear on with the tools on the side, mask on the side. I stayed close to the building because I was taking debris. I didn't know.

So I guess it was after about ten minutes, 15 minutes after 13 got their assignment, I remember looking around and I heard this sound and I looked up and it was the south tower crumbling, coming down. We all just took off, turned around and ran straight to the back of the loading dock underneath 2 World Financial Center. Moments went by. Smoke had come in the loading dock, a good amount at the beginning, but I had ended up in the back and it wasn't that bad back there. So then people were calling out to try to find other firefighters and stuff. I remember walking back in. I found all my guys except one. I couldn't find one. He went off and went out the back of the building. He made his way out the back.

So we ended up, the rest of us, coming back out of the loading dock to the front of that building where we were standing and looking for people who were hurt and looking a little bit scarred but they were

S. WRIGHT

walking around. There was one EMS guy. He was about a 400-pound guy. He was laying down on the ground. One of the guys found a gurney, I guess, his gurney that he had. There were about 15 of us there. We picked him up, put him on the gurney. My guys went to push him up the apron to the sidewalk, which was closer towards the north building, which didn't collapse yet, but my officer said, no, we're going to bring him back down the ramp to the back, to the loading dock, out the back of the building. That turned out to be a good move.

So we went to the back, picked him up on top of the loading dock there in the back about four feet. Again, there were like 15 of us, so 400 pounds wasn't too bad. We found we had to go up like another two levels to get out the rear of the building that goes back towards the marina. So we found an elevator. Two of us got on the elevator. I was one of them and another fireman with this heavy guy, the EMS worker on the stretcher. The other guys walked up. The elevator went down. What a mistake!

So now it was just me and another fireman. We were in the basement with this guy that's 400 pounds and the elevator wasn't working correctly. So good thing we got off. I remember we were looking for a

S. WRIGHT

stairwell so we could get this guy up, and I remember saying how did this happen, me and this other fireman with this 400-pound guy. We couldn't budge. We tried getting him up the stairs. It was like we got him up three stairs, let alone three floors.

So I remember looking around for the stairwell and all of a sudden the building started rumbling and the lights went out for about ten seconds. I turned my light on and I'm just thinking, I'm hoping this building isn't collapsing. I thought it was the tower coming down across the highway, but I didn't know for sure. For about ten seconds the building rumbled and then it stopped, and I felt very relieved.

I called for some more assistance to see if we could get this guy out, and then my officer was telling me, Steve, come on out of the basement because I think I smell something burning in this building much lower. So me and this other guy, that's when we tried to lift him up. We couldn't lift him up. So finally we got some help. Within a couple minutes we got some more help and we got him up, I think, 43, some guys. The north tower did come down. That's what made that building rumble like that. We came out the back. I

S. WRIGHT

don't have that EMS worker's name. The other fireman that was with me, he was all right. I met him the other day. His name is Gary. We put him on a PD boat and they took him to a hospital in Jersey or Staten Island.

After the collapse, we were walking around. We started heading south, near the marina, and from there we started to help stretch a line from one of the boats for about two blocks. We stretched it and that took a little while. Then I remember we walked back up alongside of the marina. We headed north again. I don't know what street that is. I was with the officer. I was trying to find out who to report to, what was happening, and nobody had a clue. So it was like we were on our own.

After that we waited there for a little while and then we made our way back into 2 World Financial Center where we came out. We went back through the back of the building, back through the loading dock, back out to the front, and we started climbing the metal, the debris field. We started looking for people. We didn't see anybody. Well, the people that we did see, they were crushed. So other than that, I really don't --

S. WRIGHT

Q. When you were standing fast at the staging area, did you hear any Maydays or anything that would indicate the collapse, any warning signs of the collapse?

A. No. I didn't notice any Maydays, not that I can remember. But I know there were two different channels, one for each tower. I think each tower had a different station. Anyway, it seemed to be a little foggy.

Q. Did you see anything looking at the building that indicated --

A. No. I just remember seeing just the flames, and when I heard the noise, I was already looking away. But I remember talking to some other guys. They remembered seeing the floors being blown out, I guess, when each floor collapsed on each other. I didn't see that. I heard the sound. I looked up. I saw the building collapsing and just like being pulverized, the smoke, and I probably looked at it for about a second and I just took off, if a second. Once I saw that, I was like, whoa, get out of here.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Well, thank you, Steve.

FIREFIGHTER WRIGHT: Okay.

S. WRIGHT

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is
12:28 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110282

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER VANDON WILLIAMS

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

V. WILLIAMS

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 11th, 2001. The time is 1:14 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns of the Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAMS: Firefighter Vandon Williams, Battalion 49.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: This is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you would, just tell us in your own words what happened on that day.

A. I was just finishing a 24-hour tour on the 10th, which is my wedding anniversary. I was looking for my relief to come in at the time that the first plane hit the Tower 1. I watched it on television from our quarters here in Astoria. Then when the second tower was hit, the signal came in for us to proceed to a staging area by the Midtown Tunnel.

So, knowing that I would not be relieved in time, I just decided that it was best that I go on and handle this event. I proceeded to the staging area at the Midtown Tunnel. We were there for, I guess, approximately 30, 35 minutes, until the Midtown Tunnel was cleared out, and then we proceeded through the

V. WILLIAMS

Midtown Tunnel to the west side, going down to the area of West Street and Vesey.

Upon getting to the west side, we were able to park our apparatus, and I believe we might have had about ten to 15 units as a convoy from Queens. We proceeded and we parked our car about a block or two blocks north of Chambers and West Street, and we proceeded by foot toward the command post at Vesey and West. I got as far as a block north of Chambers and West and I was told by my Battalion Chief, Chief Mike Keenan, to make sure that all the units that were with us were accounted for and he proceeded to go toward the command post, and once I had checked everybody off that had come with us, then I would proceed down to the command post.

So one block north of Chambers, I stopped and turned around and proceeded to count off the companies that came in. I guess I was doing that for about a good five or six minutes, about five minutes or so, and then I heard a rumbling. As I turned around, I saw people and some firefighters coming toward me and I looked up and I could actually see Tower No. 1 coming down.

So at that time I tried to get myself as

V. WILLIAMS

close to -- there was a police tow truck on my side, looking at the Hudson River. There were two police tow trucks parked there. So I just covered, bent next to one of the tow trucks and bent my head down until the smoke cleared. For me the eerie thing was not hearing any communications on the radio, any transmissions, anything, until most of this acrid, black smoke had cleared away, and then I could hear the sounds of our pass alarms going off around. Once most of the black smoke had kind of lightened up and we were still in a fog-type state or a fog-type atmosphere, I tried to proceed down toward Vesey and West, where my Battalion Chief Mike Keenan was.

So I got to meet him. Around Murray and West we met up. We proceeded to set up a secondary command post at Chambers and West Street. That was the call that was given out to the units, that there would be a command post set up at Chambers and West.

Then we proceeded down toward Vesey Street. We proceeded southbound on Vesey Street until we came to West and Vesey, and at that point Chief Keenan started to operate at the north side of 6 World Trade Center, the U.S. Customs Building. The pedestrian bridge at that point, that I could look at, was already

V. WILLIAMS

down and completely destroyed. I was standing on the north side of the pedestrian bridge listening to Chief Keenan as he went up and tried to get onto one of the levels that was still standing on the Customs Building, doing communications with him and finding out what companies that we had that were able to go forward and help with some of the extinguishment as far as an engine company and a truck. I don't know the names of the companies that helped us to go work at that, but there was a truck company and an engine company that were being put into action to work on the Customs Building.

At that time I also met the 14th Division Chief, a Chief McNally, and for the most of my duration I was there operating with him doing communications on the tactical and the channel for the Chiefs, going between both of them to try to ascertain who we had, what we could find in that area. I believe I worked with Chief McNally for a couple of hours before I was released to go with Chief Keenan.

We proceeded to go around the pedestrian building and try to go south toward the World Trade Center No. 1. In order to get there, we had to walk around the World Financial Center building, the

V. WILLIAMS

American Express Building, toward the water, which would be going west toward the Hudson River. We were able to walk around the building and come out around the Winter Garden building, and at that time we were now just looking at what was left of the World Trade Center No. 1.

We proceeded to walk over some of the metal and steel beams and stuff and we were able to get to a point where we were high enough to see a couple of mounds of just twisted metal, and we stood there while there were groups of firefighters, I'm not sure what units they were, that were proceeding down the mound and trying to get up to the second level of the mound to start our searches.

At that time I was able to see two civilians. One was standing up on the mound and firefighters were able to get to him and another one, and we were able to bring them out in the Stokes baskets down through the mound. It could have been an hour, hour and a half we were doing that before we were ordered to move away from that part of Tower No. 1 because there was an imminent danger of collapse of World Trade Center No. 5 and 7.

So he proceeded to take us from that area and

V. WILLIAMS

we proceeded back from that part of the World Trade Center No. 1, all units, Chief Keenan and I and some other Battalion Chiefs there. I know Battalion 46, Chief Turner was there. We operated also under the SOC command of Chief Seigel looking over those areas of Tower No. 1. Once they recalled us from that area, we proceeded back over to the area where we started at, Vesey and West. I was there approximately 15 hours. I left at 11:00 that evening.

Part of my duties with the 49 and the 14th Division, I was also used to do logistics and command with Deputy Chief -- I don't want to say his name wrong. It will come to me.

Well, I'll say this. This happened to be closer toward the evening. I guess it was close to about 4:00 or 5:00 o'clock, as it started turning more toward the sunset. We had been working on the north tower and we proceeded back over to West and Vesey. At that time I was able to see Chief Fellini talking with Chief McNally and other Chiefs on the scene that came in. But I was able to do liaison. I was there to set up for what other units that came in in the staging area and I worked as the aide that proceeded to tell what units would go in and what areas the Chiefs wanted

V. WILLIAMS

to work with. I can't think of that Chief's name, but I liaised with him.

Before the night was over with, I was one of the firefighter liaison officers in the temporary Office of Emergency Management, and I worked with Chief Cantley, I think, if I'm not mistaken, in the OEM office from about 10:00 until midnight, and at that time they released the 49 Battalion to come back to Queens. Basically, that's what I did.

Outside of seeing some carnage and being able to see at least us pull two civilians and bring them out, and they were alive when we brought them out, much of my recollection, outside of what I thought was papers and stuff coming out of Tower No. 1 while it was still up, I now realize there were some falling bodies just coming down. That's the extent of what I remember.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Great, Vandon. Thanks for the interview. The time is 1:27 p.m.

File No. 9110283

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FRANCIS NASH

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Nash

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 11, 2001. The time is 11:13 a.m. I am Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter Francis Nash, Engine 260, Firefighter First Grade, and this is in regard to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you could, in your own words, Frank, would you tell us what happened on that day.

A. We were responding, Engine 260, to the World Trade Center, going through the Midtown Tunnel. We were heading south on the West Side Highway where we parked our rig and we proceeded to walk down West Side Highway to the World Trade Center. The number 2 World Trade Center was already collapsed as we were responding and as we were walking to the World Trade Center number 1, we were approximately 100 yards away when the building number 2 collapsed.

At that time, we ran for safe cover. And that's the story.

Q. You said you were 100 feet away. Do you know --

Nash

A. I mean yards.

Q. 100 yards. Do you know what direction you were in?

A. We were north of the tower, by Barclay Street. Between Barclay and Vesey. Maybe a little more than 100 yards between there. Barclay and Vesey Street.

Q. When the second tower came down, did you see anyone? Did you see any units?

A. I saw people jumping out of the building. I didn't see any units. I saw, you know, when the building came down I was with other companies from the 45 Battalion and we were all retreating at the same time, and we got caught in the huge dust cloud for a few minutes, and then we went back to go look for companies until another chief told us to go back.

When we went looking for companies, we saw some damaged rigs. I can't tell you which companies they were. Then we were ordered by a chief to leave the area.

Q. You said you were there prior to the collapse. Did you hear any transmissions on someone's handy-talkie or any radios just prior to

Nash

the collapse?

A. No. I didn't have a department radio.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Thanks,
Frank. That concludes our interview. It's
11:16 a.m.

File No. 9110284

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JAMES POWERS

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Powers

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 11, 2001, and the time is 11:25 a.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with James Powers, Firefighter First from Engine 35. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Engine 35.

Q. James, just tell us the events as you remember them on September 11th.

A. The morning of September 11th I arrived at Engine 35 to get into uniform to go to an educational day. Before I left, the TV showed us the first tower smoking and fire. We didn't even know what it was before I left to go to the Rock, Randall's Island. By the time I got to Randall's Island, the Lieutenant conducting educational day told us that a plane had hit the first tower and that we might be going back to our companies. He didn't know yet, but he was going to start educational proceedings. As soon as he said that, the second plane hit the second tower. Within minutes we were dispatched back to our companies.

Powers

I reported to Engine 35 and reported in to Lieutenant Whalen. Lieutenant Whalen put me in the Engine and said, "Right now you're going to be our fifth man in the engine." We took roll call of the units that had already been sent here as a staging area and within 15 minutes of being brought back, maybe even ten minutes of being brought back to the firehouse Engine 35 was dispatched to the World Trade Center.

We were told by the dispatcher to use the West Side Highway and we went across 125th Street and we went down. Myself, firefighters Lowrey, Vanname, Fischer, and Keith Schroeder were on the rig with Lieutenant Whalen. We also had Lieutenant Patten and Battalion Chief Horan on 35's rig. We reported in down at West Side Highway, West Street, right above Barclay Street, and we ran into battalion chiefs there. We had heard on the radio the first tower collapsed. We heard somebody on the department radio calling for help, saying he was trapped.

We were told that we were going to be going into World Trade Center number 1, the north tower building, because it was still standing and there

was still fire. When we got to the battalion chiefs that were on West and, I believe, Barclay, they said, "Okay. Make sure you've got everything, your roll-ups. We're still going into this tower number 1 or World Trade Center number 1."

At that time there was heavy black smoke pumping from the top floors of the tower. You could see the collapse dust and stuff around the other buildings, and the top of the tower was just blazing black smoke. On our way to the building, we had just passed Vesey Street, we were near the pedestrian bridge when you heard the rumble and the roar of the building and at which point we all looked up. Nobody really moved for a second. The tower began to collapse and we all ran back up the West Side Highway. We ran with our gear still on. We dropped our folds, roll-ups and ran hard up West Street.

I made it to, I believe, either Murray or Park Place, wherever the high school was, and the collapse, the dust and the debris had already caught up to me and was actually pushing me, and I dove into the left of that street, whether it was Murray or Park Place. I don't know where it was, but I

dove in there and somebody pulled me into the high school and when I got into the high school there were already firefighters and Police Officers in there. When I was there I realized that I didn't have any of the guys that I was with with me, so I went back out onto that street. But when I did, I was immediately lost in the black dust and I couldn't even see my way to get back into the building that I just came out of. I put my face piece on and started breathing the air, but I realized the face piece was contaminated and I was sucking some stuff in.

I went onto the West Side Highway and slowly walked through the black and gray dust heading back towards where we were to see if anybody was still there, to see where everybody was. When I got back to where I think we were, which was below Vesey but above the pedestrian bridge, there was a couple of people just completely covered with dust and I just brushed them off and chased them back to go north on the West Side Highway. I did run into one of my guys, Keith Schroeder, and asked him where everybody was and he said he didn't know. He didn't know.

We stayed together and then we saw Billy

Vannname, our chauffeur, and we asked him about our lieutenant, Lieutenant Whalen and also Lieutenant Hadden and Chief Horan, who had gone ahead of us towards the tower, and they were in front of us while we were walking towards it.

We then found our Firefighters Fischer, Lowrey and our Lieutenant Whalen, and we started picking up our folds to go down towards fire. There was fire on the streets, there was fire in the cars. And then he realized the roll-ups were gonna do us no good, so we dropped our roll-ups and we started looking to help people and I was -- I had breathed in a whole bunch of stuff and I was starting to get dizzy and I could feel myself trying to breathe, but I couldn't get any air into where I was and I started getting lightheaded.

We helped a couple more people back up the West Side Highway. We split up, I stayed with Billy Vannname. The other guys went down into underneath the pedestrian bridge with a line they had to try to put out fire. We then found Lieutenant Hadden and he told us that Chief Horan was okay. He told us the tower came down on top of guys in the hotel and we were gonna try to get to that.

Powers

Maybe 15 minutes later I was completely overcome by all the dust I had already breathed in and I could no longer operate and I was starting to pass out. I don't think I passed out. Somebody says I did. I was treated by a couple of EMT's and some firefighters and they took me back up the West Side Highway to near Murray Street and we were sitting there and then somebody said that there was a major gas leak in one of the buildings and we had to run from there, so everybody started running again. As I tried to run, I knew I could no longer run. So I was loaded onto a green golf cart and I was taken to St. Vincent's Hospital and I was in and out. I could breathe in, but I felt like I wasn't getting any air, and I was taken to St. Vincent's Hospital approximately 45 minutes to an hour after my arrival at the World Trade Center.

Q. That's it?

A. That's it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you, Jimmy. The time now is 11:33 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110286

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOSEPH SULLIVAN

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

J. SULLIVAN

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: The date is December 11, 2001. The time is 1442 hours. This is Battalion Chief John Malkin of the safety battalion.

I'm conducting an interview with firefighter 6th Grade Joseph Sullivan, Engine 224. We are at the quarters of 224, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001, and following this is the interview.

Q. Okay.

A. Okay. We responded from quarters. The ticket came in at 8:54. We were going on the first alarm to the staging area by the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. En route to the staging area, we were going down Columbia Street, saw the second plane strike the building and we went from being a, quote, good job or a rough job, or we were going to earn our money today.

Some of the guys put it, to -- started realizing that it was a terrorist incident, that we were -- you know, we were in for more than we thought originally.

We pulled into the staging area. We were there for maybe -- it's a little foggy. Maybe four, five minutes. I got all my gear set.

J. SULLIVAN

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Then I remember getting sent in. The only -- the only other companies that I remember hearing over the radio besides us, there was a bunch of -- I remember hearing 202, 101, I'm pretty sure, and went through the tunnel.

It was pretty slow go. I was sitting with my back to the lieutenant, and I remember seeing people out the window, seeing people in buses trying to use their cell phones being confused after seeing all the apparatus going by, not knowing what was going on.

They were scared. One guy yelled up into the -- up to us, "Are we going to be able to get out of here?" We were nervous that maybe somebody was going to bomb the tunnel also. Eventually, we got out of the tunnel with a sigh of relief, started making our way down, going down West Street, see some stuff on the floor, pieces of bodies, bone, stuff like that.

Really couldn't see up. The buildings are too tall. I saw one body. Most of it was just pieces of bodies. As we were riding in, we must have ran over some debris from the plane. We saw debris all over the floor. We saw a wheel. There was cars that were flattened. It was obvious that heavy things had fallen

J. SULLIVAN

on them, but the reason that I say that we ran over something is because we had pulled up -- I believe it was in front of the south tower, and Smitty was driving that day, the chauffeur. He didn't like where we were, and he shimmied up a little more. We saw tranny fluid on the floor, so Richie Saulle climbed underneath there with some putty, and I cut some chocks up, little splinters, and kind of plugged it up.

Q. Coming from where? Where was it coming from?

A. From underneath the tranny pan.

Q. From your rig?

A. From our rig, yeah. So just quick tried to, like, patch it up. At that time, as far as I know, we didn't have any orders, as far as where to go.

We went up there. Lieutenant DeSimone told us to get settled, get an extra cylinder ready, ready to grab your hose rollups, like that. There was a transmission. I didn't have a radio on at the time. I'm just going by what I heard going on around me, but I don't know who it was or exactly where it came from, if it came from the command center or not.

Somebody had told us to move up towards Vesey Street, I guess in order to relay water, if it was needed. So we did so, and then Lieutenant DeSimone

J. SULLIVAN

asked us again to get our cylinders, hose rollups ready, and by the time we twisted and turned, the first building had come down, started to fall.

People scattered. I was right next to Lieutenant DeSimone. We took a knee, masked up, covered over us. It was -- that lifted relatively quick, the first one. I don't know if it was because we were blocked by the north tower or some of the other buildings. That lifted relatively quickly.

I went ahead and I started looking around. It looked just like snow, and I took my mask off, put my hood up over my face, and I went over by another member, Mike Hazel. He was giving blows of air. There were a couple of cops. There was a maintenance man. Turned out to be a maintenance man, afterwards we found out, from one of the buildings, so I was giving him a hand.

We were doing that, and then we got oxygen off the rig and gave it to the maintenance man. We were looking out for Smitty, and for Stu Bailey. Smitty had run down the block. Stu Bailey had run down the block, and now we were looking for them to make sure that they were all right, because actually when the building had come down, on the angle that it was --

J. SULLIVAN

the north tower was over here. You won't be able to get this on tape, but the north tower was kind of blocking the south tower.

Q. Okay.

A. Because of its natural angle.

Q. Yeah.

A. Yeah. You could see it right there on the map, so here we are, yeah.

Q. You guys were parked. Now, we are talking about the north tower shielding you from the south tower collapse?

A. Yeah.

Q. So where were you guys at that time?

A. From the best of my knowledge, I'd say that we were up right around -- we were up right around here.

Q. Okay. He's indicating with the rig, right?

A. Yes.

Q. The indication is that they're on West Street at the north foot bridge, so that would be just north of the first tower, the north tower.

A. So we were still covered over, but it lifted relatively fast compared to the second one.

Now, when it did collapse, I saw a chunk come

J. SULLIVAN

down. I thought it was a partial collapse, like maybe part of the fascia coming down, so we were actually looking, you know. It came down, and we were looking, and all of a sudden the cloud rushed. It was like whoa, but then a couple of seconds it overtook us. So we may have stopped then. A couple of other firemen came out. I don't want to curse, but for lack of a better word they were, mother ba, ba, ba, bouncing their helmets off the floor.

Q. Where did they come out of?

A. They were south of us. They were a little south of us. They came and they started moving up. One of the firemen -- I don't remember where he's from. He was a ladder, because I remember he had a red patch. He had a gash on his head. Triaged him, patched him up.

A couple of other people -- like I said, we gave oxygen to the maintenance man. A couple of other people running around, dazed, grabbed them, checked them out. We were looking for Smitty. We were looking for Stuey.

Q. Smittie and Stuey are guys from your company?

A. Yes, yes. Yes, members of the company.

Q. Where did they go? Where were they at this

J. SULLIVAN

time?

A. They went north. They started moving up north.

Q. When the building was coming down?

A. When the building was coming down. So they went north, and Smitty had come back. We found him. Stuey later on had hooked up with another company, was coming around looking, see what he could do.

After that, there was a lot of commotion. It's a little hazy. I remember somebody screaming and the second tower was coming down, the north tower, and that was coming down, and we just took off running. Actually, I still had my extra cylinder in my hand. I started running, felt it was slowing me down. Discarded that.

I had a choice to go left on Vesey Street or to continue straight. As I turned, thinking about going left on Vesey, I decided not to, but I saw the cloud coming, pressed the face piece up against my face, turned on my air cylinder and started walking along the fence. I remember a chain link fence.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Started walking along the chain link fence. I didn't want to run because I know I depleted some of

J. SULLIVAN

my tank with the previous collapse and from giving air to people, so I just remember trying not to panic going at a hurried pace, but not running and sucking down my bottle.

As I'm going, I heard somebody -- I remember somebody moaning or something like that, and I reached off the fence, and I went off the fence a little bit. I couldn't find anybody. I started going forward, and I bumped into another person, which turned out to be one of the guys from my company, Mike Hazel. I bumped into him. "Who's that?" He said, "It's Mike Hazel. Who's that?" I said, "It's Sully." Running out of air. Changed my tank out for me. He still had his extra cylinder.

Q. Okay.

A. Changed that along the fence, and as luck would have it, another member came by with a flashlight, and he was looking with the flashlight, and we walked out along the fence, kept going north till we were out of the cloud.

This one was very thick, the second one, because I remember as I was walking, and I had the face piece cheated up against my face, I had knocked my helmet back trying to get it on, and I didn't get it on

J. SULLIVAN

till right before I changed Mike's cylinder, but I wiped across my face piece, thinking that it was just ash, or dust on the face piece. When I wiped it clear, it was still black. It was still -- you couldn't see. It was pretty thick.

As we walked out, started to dissipate. People -- somebody turned on a hydrant. People -- cops, everybody were diving into the hydrant, trying to wash their faces off, wash their mouths out. It was filthy, wretched water, but nobody cared. There was nurses and doctors coming around with eye wash.

There was a transmission to go north. I remember a disturbance by the water. I saw a police officer come out to the street and start directing people away from the water, and it turned out there was a gas leak or something, but at the time we didn't know if it was a bomb or -- so we just kept getting orders to go north, go north, go north.

Eventually we turned around, and we went north, settled and regrouped and worked our way down a little bit to investigate and see what was going on.

As far as anybody that has passed or is missing that I saw -- the only person I thought I might have seen was Dennis Oberg. I thought I saw him.

J. SULLIVAN

Q. Who's he?

A. He was a probie in my class.

Q. What company?

A. Geez, I forget what company he's in. I really don't recall, Chief, I'm sorry. I thought I saw him after the second collapse. The first collapse rather. I'm sorry. But I can't guaranty that, but that was about it on -- I had seen Terry Rivera when we came in. He narrowly got away. He's in 10 truck. He was on the detail. I actually spoke to him the night before, because I had a friend that's in the academy being assigned there for his seven-week rotation.

I spoke to him the night before, and as we were coming down West Street, I saw him, and it wound up that when the first building was coming down, I guess some of the other firemen -- this is the story he's telling me, that they thought it was debris coming down, and they ran into the lobby, and he drove underneath the rig, and the building came down and that's why he was alive, instead of going in, going under the rig.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Throughout the rest of the day, I was across the street from -- I'll show you on the map. Where the

J. SULLIVAN

movie theatre is across the street from the telephone company.

Q. This is the north tower. This is the south tower.

A. South tower, and where would the telephone company be? That's it right there.

Q. Okay.

A. So I would imagine it's right around here is the movie theatre.

Q. Indicating across West Street on the west side of West Street just north of Vesey.

A. I was again with Mike Hazel. I stuck with him. He's one of the senior members. I stuck with him most of the day, and we were walking back towards where our captain was, because after the recall he had come in. This is later on in the day, and we heard a rumble that Building 7 was coming down, so we didn't know what to expect, so we wound up doing -- actually a broken window in the door of the theatre. There were two police officers actually walking next to us so I told them, I says, "Duck in there," and we both ducked in there, too, and it really didn't, you know, reach us.

We came out and went down to see what we could do with helping with the stretch, because now by

J. SULLIVAN

this time they were starting to draft, so I think it was -- I don't know what marine company was drafting, but it was 53 engine, into 84 engine, to us.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. The 224, because we actually -- when we were getting ordered up north, all of a sudden we started hearing 224, start water. That's why we wound up going down and investigating.

Q. Right.

A. Because the rig had to be okay, so we wanted to go down and man the rig. There was -- I remember there was really no pressure in the hydrants.

Q. Right. Who was calling you to man -- to supply water? You don't know?

A. I don't know. I don't know, to be honest with you, but I do know that the water pressure was terrible. The volume -- it looked like there was volume there. You turn on the hydrant, there was water flowing out, but, I mean, the hoses barely filled, you know, at any rate.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Then they started drafting later on in the afternoon, and the rest of the day we were pretty much by the rig. The rest of the night, I should say.

J. SULLIVAN

I think we probably went home around eleven, started heading back towards the house, as far as I can remember.

Q. Go back to when you took the position at the hydrant after you were first at the south tower and they told you go up north, you wound up somewhere north of the north tower by the foot bridge, right?

A. We were by the hook.

Q. Okay, you hooked up?

A. As far as I can remember, yeah.

Q. And then go over where the guys were again, what duties they performed, how long you were there, how long you operated there. What did you do there?

A. Well, geez, let me think how long we were there. I had moved up. We were --

Q. Go ahead.

A. It's hard with the time. We were helping the chauffeur to hook up.

Q. Okay.

A. I'm trying to think if --

Q. How long were you there when the south tower came down?

A. How long were we there when the south tower came down? Maybe 15 minutes or so, maybe.

J. SULLIVAN

Q. Okay, 15 minutes. You helped him hook up?

A. We were helping him hook up. I remember actually I think the -- also the first -- the first place that we stopped we might have started to hook up also there.

Q. Okay.

A. And then had to pack it back up.

Q. Okay.

A. I remember for some reason we went with him when he moved.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. We were helping him. I remember helping Richie Saulle with trying to plug up the tranny pan. I remember Lieutenant DeSimone telling us to get an extra cylinder, get a hose rollup, and then he says we're going to go over and see what the story is.

Q. Where were you now? You had moved up to the north part?

A. We had -- I'm trying to think if it's after the first time or the second time we moved. I think that was actually after the first time we moved.

Q. Okay. Did you get your rollup and your cylinder?

A. Yes, we actually took the rollups off the

J. SULLIVAN

rig, and we had --

Q. Did you walk up to the building any place to the south tower? Did you walk away from the rig?

A. We started -- yeah, we walked away from the rig. We started walking towards the building, yes, okay. It was after the first time we moved that he -- what do you call it? That we started going towards the building, and that's whether they were ordered to move up.

Q. So you put everything back on the rig?

A. So I put the hose rollup back on the rig.

Q. Right.

A. I didn't put my cylinder back into the proper spot. I just stowed it, tossed it the rig.

Q. Did you get back on the rig to ride up to the other spot? You walked up the other spot?

A. Walked, walked.

Q. Now, the rig goes up to West Street where you indicated north, somewhere in the vicinity of the north walk bridge?

A. The north walk bridge.

Q. You found the hydrant?

A. Yes.

Q. And then you said you helped the chauffeur

J. SULLIVAN

hook up.

A. Helped the chauffeur hook up.

Q. And two guys went where? There was something about two of you fellows went --

A. When the building came down.

Q. Now, how long were you there? You said 15 minutes maybe?

A. Maybe 15 minutes. I tell you the truth, it's very hazy.

Q. So what happened in that 15 minutes? You just --

A. I tell you the truth, people jumping out of the buildings.

Q. Okay.

A. I tell you the truth, that was quite a shock, too. I mean, there we were, and out of the corner of my eye, I thought maybe it was a piece of debris falling down. It was a person jumping out of the window, and another one, another one, another one, and I don't know. It was pretty hazy as far as, like, how much time --

Q. Okay.

A. -- was spent or what was going on, and again I didn't have a radio.

J. SULLIVAN

Q. Right.

A. So I couldn't really hear what was going on. I could only hear if I was next to somebody.

Q. Right.

A. You know.

Q. Was your officer there with you?

A. I remember Lieutenant DeSimone walking ahead of us towards the building.

Q. Okay.

A. This is when he was telling us to get ready, that we were going to go and see, you know, what the story was, what we could do.

He was ahead of us. He was a good maybe 20, 30 yards because he had told us to get our rollups and our cylinders, and he started walking up.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. As that's when we started walking towards him, towards the building, and he told us put our stuff back on and move up, and then we did it again. I grabbed the cylinder again.

Q. After you relocated up to the north --

A. After we relocated again.

Q. Took the stuff off, helped the chauffeur hook up.

J. SULLIVAN

A. Yeah.

Q. And then what do you remember? Did you go into the north tower?

A. No, we didn't go into the north tower.

Q. Did you go to the command post over there? Did you see Ganci at the command post on West Street?

A. No, I didn't see Ganci.

Q. Okay.

A. I didn't see Ganci. I was -- most of the time, I was on the -- well --

Q. Go ahead.

A. We're facing this way with the rig.

Q. Okay. That's facing --

A. Most of the time I'm on the left side of the rig.

Q. Okay. That's facing north on West Street, okay.

A. So I really couldn't see too much of what was going on, because all the hydrants were on this side, so I was running around over there.

Q. So while you were in that area, the south tower collapsed.

A. The south tower collapsed, right.

Q. It was a tremendous cloud --

J. SULLIVAN

A. Yes.

Q. -- that lasted for some period of time.

A. Yes.

Q. 10 minutes, 5 minutes, 10 minutes, something like that. You used your mask intermittently.

A. Yes.

Q. Then that cleared.

Then what did you do after that? There was a long period of time between the second building collapsing?

A. Maybe 15, 20 minutes, and we were -- that's when we were helping the firemen that were coming that were from south of us that started moving up.

Q. Okay.

A. We were helping civilians, police officers.

Q. Okay.

A. And we were trying to get organized. We were looking for Smitty, make sure he's all right.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Stuey.

Q. Where did they go again?

A. They went up north.

Q. They went up north because that cloud enveloped you guys?

J. SULLIVAN

A. Because the cloud enveloped us.

Q. They moved up north. They were looking for them, but at the same time you were helping civilians?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. Kind of like --

Q. Yeah.

A. You know.

Q. Okay.

A. New on the job.

Q. Okay, all right.

A. But, I mean, I tried to do the best that I could, as far as helping out. I didn't want to -- you know, I -- but I just remembered doing that, and I remember also at the same time looking up again.

There was still people coming out of the north tower, jumping, and I remember one person in particular, if it really was a person. There was -- it was a guy who looked like he was standing in the window maybe, hanging on. I just remember seeing it looked like a white shirt up there, and thinking, don't jump, you know, they're going to get you. You know, they are going to get up there and get you. Didn't happen, but I don't know.

J. SULLIVAN

I just remember after that one came down, there was just an order to move north, and so we moved north. People were trying to wash up again in the hydrants, and then there was the whole commotion by the waterfront, gas leak, a bomb, whatever, you know. We didn't know what was going on.

There was also a transmission at some time. I don't remember if it was after the first tower came down.

Q. Yeah.

A. Somebody said -- I don't know if it actually came over the radio or something. You heard a buzz about that there was another plane being tracked. I don't know if it was a military plane maybe somebody was tracking.

Q. Right.

A. Or they were talking about the plane in Philadelphia, and they didn't know where it was heading, but that was also -- caused a little bit of a commotion, too, so it was a mass exodus up forward north. People were trying to get settled, get reorganized. They had that whole thing with the gas.

Q. Yeah.

A. They pushed us farther north again, regroup,

J. SULLIVAN

went to go see what we could do. We heard the transmission 224 start water.

Q. Yeah.

A. Looked at each other, like, huh? We realized the rig was all right, didn't get crushed, and we wanted to go down there and man the rig.

Q. You guys never got orders to go into the Tower 1, right?

A. Not that I'm aware of that.

Q. Yeah.

A. Not that I'm aware of.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't believe we had orders to go into either building.

Q. Uh-huh. You didn't see command post or -- any chiefs you remember on West Street? You didn't see -- did you see the chaplain? Did you remember anybody?

A. The only person I remember, really remember seeing a hundred percent --

Q. Yeah.

A. -- is Terry Rivera. I drove him to probie school every day.

Q. Okay.

J. SULLIVAN

A. And he was standing outside on West Street. He looked like he was looking for somebody.

Q. Yeah.

A. And as we were driving down West Street, I yelled out to him, and he didn't look like he heard me. When I spoke to him later, he did hear a voice. He didn't know it was me, though. He thought it was a truck calling him, but he was in and out of the south tower before it fell, and that was the only specific person that I remember.

There was actually -- I think the Rescue 5. There was a rescue firefighter that actually rode the back of our rig through the tunnel to the trade center. I wasn't even aware that he was on the back of the rig. I didn't know until sometime after this happened, weeks, that he came out. I didn't even know. There was a lot of things going on, you know.

Q. Where was the staging area on the Brooklyn side? Where did you respond to when you staged there?

A. Geez.

Q. Outside the Battery Tunnel was it?

A. It was outside the Battery Tunnel. I think it was -- Hamilton Avenue? Let me think.

Q. You were there when the second plane hit, you

J. SULLIVAN

said?

A. Yeah, we were coming down -- I believe it was Columbia Street, and I was with my back to the lieutenant, and the lieutenant had actually said, "Look out the window, look out the window."

We didn't see the plane yet. Looking out the building, the smoke was already across the river. There was papers falling on the Brooklyn side already.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a plane coming, and I actually said to Mike Hazel, I said, "What is this guy going to do? Is he going to try to fly under the smoke?"

I thought it was a regular pilot, just, you know, that he was going to have to divert his flight path because of this big, huge plume of smoke, and I'm saying to myself, why isn't he flying around the building on the windward side instead of, you know -- it looked like he was trying to duck under the smoke, but then he banked and hit the building, and that was that.

Q. Well --

A. I mean, actually, the guys on the other side of the rig didn't believe me, because when this

J. SULLIVAN

whole -- when this all started I was upstairs, and they said, "Hey, Joe, you know, a plane hit the World Trade Center," and being the johnnie in the house, I thought they were pulling my leg. Get out of here, you know. Came downstairs and saw it on the news.

My first thought was it was like what happened with the Empire State building. You always see these old, you know, newsreels or whatever. They're talking about the B-29 or B-17 that hit it.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. Oh, wow, you know, this is going to be trouble, but I thought it was an accident. Then on the way there, just, you know, stopped, turned into something totally different, and I don't know.

Q. Okay. How did you guys get back to quarters late at night when you were finally relieved?

A. Basically hitched a ride in an ambulance.

Q. Yeah.

A. We walked up north. We were trying to look for a bus to get back. Couldn't find a bus. I don't know what the story was, and we wound up flagging down -- what do you call it?

Actually, it might be of some interest. There was a person that they -- really wouldn't be.

J. SULLIVAN

They thought had been lost.

Q. A fireman?

A. A fireman, a lieutenant, actually, and our lieutenant saw him on the bridge, and he passed it along. I don't know what the story was with that, but probably really of no relevance, but yeah, we flagged down a volunteer ambulance.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. We were piled in. Just came home.

Q. Okay. Anything else you remember? That's good.

A. Nothing off the top, Chief.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. I thank the firefighter for the interview, Firefighter Joseph Sullivan.

This concludes the interview at 1508 hours.
That finishes it.

File No. 9110287

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOSEPH MEOLA

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

J. MEOLA

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is December 11, 2001. The time is 2:53 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the safety battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with Joseph Meola in the quarters of Engine 96.

Q. Joe, just tell us what you saw on September 11.

A. On September 11, approximately -- I'd say it was a little bit after nine, we responded on -- I was in Engine Company 91. Responded on the second fifth alarm to Tower 2. I went down with a Captain Montera and a Firefighter Brian Russo.

We went in the RAC unit with the RAC unit guy whose name is -- I forget his name. He was in the RAC unit that day.

We left quarters, went all the way down Second Avenue, eventually pulled onto Church Street outside Tower No. 1, World Trade Center No. 1. On foot we proceeded to Church and Liberty, where we tried to get a couple of extra masks.

After not getting any extra masks off the rigs that we saw there, there were a couple of engine

J. MEOLA

companies, maybe Engine 207, 209. It was a 200 number, low 200 number. I don't remember. A couple of rigs there, low 200 numbers.

We went into the quarters of 10 and 10. After we were in the quarters for approximately 30 seconds -- it was a triage center at the time. After we left 10 and 10, as soon as we walked outside the door, a firefighter from an engine company 2 -- I believe it's 216, Danny Suhr, just outside 10 and 10's quarters on Liberty Street, got hit by a jumper.

They were pulling him away. I believe they got him into an ambulance, and they were yelling at us to get away, because jumpers were jumping from the south tower onto Liberty Street, and a few jumpers came close to us, but no -- we met up with another company, Engine 58, which is in our battalion, which was in the 12th battalion.

I believe they were on Liberty at the time. I don't know if they were going in the building. I don't remember, but they did make their way into the building before us, not building -- not Tower 2, but Tower 3. The Vista, Marriott.

They made it into the Vista before us after -- later on. We met up with them on Liberty, talked

J. MEOLA

to the boss for a little while, talked to a couple of the guys, and we were avoiding lots of material that was falling from the building.

We went under -- I believe it's 130 Liberty Street. The building -- I think that's the address, actually, 130. There was a scaffolding, and we went under the scaffolding there, and we made it to West. We made it to West Street, down to West Street, asking firefighters where the command post was.

They showed us that the command post was located just outside the 2 World Financial Center in front of a garage, a parking garage. We made our way down that block and to the command post.

At the command post was several other companies. I don't know what companies were there at the time. Several other companies, ESU police, several of the high chiefs -- Ganci, Burns, Donald Burns, Ganci. I remember seeing those two. I remember seeing -- I think it might have been Barbara. I'm not a hundred percent sure. I just -- there was a lot of chiefs at this command post.

At that time, I believe it was -- I believe the chief was -- okay. At that time, I believe it was Chief Burns who explained to us that we were going to

J. MEOLA

go to -- we were going to go through the Vista, the Vista -- Marriott Vista, into 2 World Trade Center to a subbasement with an engineer that was at that post at the time, at the command post.

We were getting our gear together. We were getting ready to walk across the street, and he told us to hold up. We didn't have our forcible entry tools. We were an engine company, didn't have any forcible entry tools. At that time he sent our chauffeur. He didn't send the chauffeur. I think the chauffeur went to the rig to get the entry tools, and that was the last I seen that chauffeur that -- until later on our chauffeur was -- did survive, but was hurt in the first building collapse, Tower No. 2.

He held us there approximately within three minutes. As we are looking up at the building, what I saw was, it looked like the building was blowing out on all four sides. We actually heard the pops. Didn't realize it was the falling -- you know, you heard the pops of the building. You thought it was just blowing out.

We turned -- I turned to take a look where to go, turned around. Several companies, myself and half of my company, ran into a parking garage at 2 -- I

J. MEOLA

believe it's 2 World Financial Center. We ran into the parking garage.

As I ran into the parking garage, I turned around. I saw the whole side -- the side of the building falling into the street and the cloud of dust coming towards us.

As we got to the back of the garage, the dust had entered the garage, and somebody had opened up the door that was ahead of us into a stairwell. We got to the stairwell. We got into the stairwell. We shut the door. There was already maybe 20 firemen in there already and officers in the stairwell for the financial center, and a couple of more guys banged on the door. We opened up the door. We pulled them in, got a little contaminated, but not bad at all, and we made ourselves -- after that we made ourselves up to the 1st Floor of the financial center.

After that, we exited the rear of the financial center, and what you can see was -- I believe it's the little bay there. The North Cove Yacht Club coming out of the back there. We went right -- you could see the water of the yacht club. We worked our way around 2 World Financial Center, and it was pretty dark, dusty.

J. MEOLA

You couldn't -- your eyes were hurting. You couldn't breathe, but you tried to head for the water. I think I believe I ended up on North End Avenue, one block just short of the water, right on the water somewhere.

After on North Avenue, I believe we went down Vesey Street -- Vesey or Murray. It's one of those two -- back towards West Street. I was with half -- maybe half the members of the company, three of four members of the company. The other three or four members, at that time we were -- we did not know where they went. We didn't know if they made it in the garage, they were still in the garage, if they were out on West Street. We got split up.

As we worked our way back to Vesey towards West, we ran into several people that we knew. We tried to get people together. We were going back towards West and Vesey somewhere where we heard people screaming, "The second building is coming down. The second building is coming down."

Within ten seconds, the second building started to drop. We ran up West. We made it up West maybe to Barclay or past the telephone company building up on West, past the telephone company building. We

J. MEOLA

didn't make it as far as Stuyvesant or where the other overpass is yet. We didn't make it up that far. I don't remember. Maybe Murray or Barclay on West.

We took cover from the second cloud, smoke that engulfed us, and...

Q. Did you have any warning that the second tower was coming down, via radio traffic or --

A. Radio traffic. Radio traffic on -- what you heard on the handy-talkies was you heard conflicting reports of guys saying hold in the first tower or -- and you heard other guys saying, "Get out. Evac the first tower. Evac. Evac the first tower."

Also at the command post, when I was at the command post earlier, the radio traffic that you heard was Maydays. I didn't have a radio, but the -- several radios were on in that vicinity of bosses or control man or -- at the time in that -- and I believe the radio traffic was -- you heard several Maydays coming from -- I don't know if it's Tower 1 or Tower 2, Channel 1 or Channel 2. I believe we were on Channel 2, and you heard Maydays on Channel 2 coming from rescue. I believe it was rescue companies. I'm not a hundred percent sure. My memory is just jogged on that. You heard Maydays. You did hear Maydays,

J. MEOLA

several Maydays. "We need water. Mayday. We need water. Mayday. We need water. We got no water," to that effect. I don't remember exactly, just -- that day is such a tough day.

Coming back to Vesey and West on another communication after the first tower fell, Tower 2 fell, Tower 1, you heard guys -- firemen, chiefs, lieutenants, I don't know who -- yelling conflicting reports, some saying -- most saying, "Get the hell out of the tower. Get out of Tower 1. You know, Tower 2 fell."

I didn't realize the full Tower 2 fell until we went back to Vesey and West. At the time when I ran into the parking garage, I believe only half -- I thought only half the building fell down. I did not know the whole building came down, and when we got back there, I realized the whole tower was down, and that's what you were, like, the whole -- you know, you knew the other one was imminent.

After that, we worked our way up West Street. I got -- I believe we met up with another two tour members of the company. I remember going to a hydrant, going to a rig, opening up a hydrant, everybody washing their face, their eyes out, trying to

J. MEOLA

get their composure back together, and in -- we wanted to work our way down towards West and Vesey, and we got held up by one of our bosses, which said -- which told us to hold, to hold tight there and go back to the command post, which was now located somewhere up by Stuyvesant. I believe it was located by Stuyvesant High School.

We went back there, washed up, cleaned up and I spent, you know, a part of the day there before returning back later on that afternoon to the site.

I believe that's about it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you, Joe.

The time now is 3:08, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110288

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM REYNOLDS

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Reynolds

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 11, 2001. The time is 1:59 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with William Reynolds, Firefighter First Grade, from Engine 76, in the quarters of Engine 76.

Q. William, just tell us the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. We arrived down through the West Side Highway, I honestly don't remember what street we had gotten off the rig, 76 Engine. Probably somewhere in the area of Murray and West or maybe something south of that like Vesey. At that time, the engine went off to places unknown and the company ended up down at 2 World Financial Center by the command post, waiting for an assignment.

More companies arrived and so probably there was approximately 45 people there. I don't know the other companies that were there. I wasn't really paying attention. I did notice at the time I saw standing next to me Mayor Guiliani and the Police Commissioner, Chief Ganci and Chief Ray Downey. It

Reynolds

seemed like a decent amount of time that we were there and we as a group had become pretty distracted with the amount of people jumping down out of the north tower. It got to the point that we were talking about not looking at the people. So as a group we all turned our backs to them so we wouldn't have to look. Then the noise from the people hitting, it became so much that we ended up having to turn around and look again. This went on for a while and I remember the people that were hitting the awning over the doorway, they were blown to pieces. I remember saying, "I hope they don't hit that awning, because this way I don't have to see them blown to pieces."

After a while, and I don't know how long it was, I was distracted by a large explosion from the south tower and it seemed like fire was shooting out a couple of hundred feet in each direction, then all of a sudden the top of the tower started coming down in a pancake. I remember my jaw dropping and just staring at it and Richard Banaciski, one of the firemen that was there, yelled "Run" and I turned and I started running into the parking garage of the Financial Center.

Reynolds

Q. Bill, just one question. The fire that you saw, where was the fire? Like up at the upper levels where it started collapsing?

A. It appeared somewhere below that. Maybe twenty floors below the impact area of the plane. I saw it as fire and when I looked at it on television afterwards, it doesn't appear to show the fire. It shows a rush of smoke coming out below the area of the plane impact.

The reason why I think the cameras didn't get that image is because they were a far distance away and maybe I saw the bottom side where the plane was and the smoke was up above it.

So we ran into this parking garage, the parking garage was empty of cars and it was lit and I remember thinking, "I hope that this building doesn't fall down and crush the building that I'm in." And I remember saying, "I can't die today. My wife wouldn't accept this."

So anyway, we made it to the back of the building and I remember looking over my shoulder as this wall of darkness came in. Luckily it was only just smoke. I was standing next to my Lieutenant in the engine, Lieutenant Farrington, and I had set my

Reynolds

mask down by the ramp at the entrance and I didn't have a mask. I said to him, "Frank, if the smoke gets bad, you're gonna have to share your mask with me." Then we continued back further. Frank found an exit and a security guard, we asked the security guard if that exits the building and he said, "Yes." I remember saying to him, "Are you absolutely sure?" He said, "Yes." So I said, "All right. Then get out of here. Go."

So all of a sudden Frank came out with a life saving rope, which I wasn't aware he had at the time, and he hooked it to the doorknob and we started walking back into the area where we just ran from and I heard people with masks on, the guys had masks on, I could hear them in all directions. So I followed behind Frank and I started talking out loud saying, "If anybody can't find the way out, we have a rope over here. He'll take you to the door." Some voices said, "Where?" I said, "I'll keep talking. Just come to my voice and there is a way out over here."

Then I remember hearing somebody saying, "Oh, I have a door here." I said, "Well, if you have a door, then go out the door. But if anybody is lost,

Reynolds

just come over to my voice and there is a rope and you can follow it out." So then guys started showing up towards me. They put their hands on the rope and that's the last I saw of them.

So after we were confident that there was no one left in the parking garage, Frank and I followed the rope back and we worked our way to the back door. When we got out, we were by the North Cove Yacht Harbor and we went out to the Hudson River. What I had forgotten to state previous to this, before the towers had fallen, two emergency service cops had come up to us in wired gear, carrying uzis and asked if we had seen any civilians. They said, "If you see any, come get us. Don't go near the civilians." At the time there were no civilians around, in my eye shot.

I also remember, at that time, which I had also forgotten to state, that in the north tower there was a woman who may have been a security guard for the complex and she was just walking back and forth seeming to be oblivious of the people falling down, jumping down right on the other side of the glass. In hindsight, I would say she probably was in shock.

There was also a Police Officer in there. He

Reynolds

just seemed to be just standing there not paying attention to what this woman was doing. Anyway, back to getting out to the water.

We started regrouping as a company, verified we were present. We did not know at the time where George Rodriguez, our chauffeur, was. There was a lot of radio traffic. The Lieutenant was trying to find out where George was. After a short time we heard communication that George was fine.

I remember then seeing a civilian, the first civilian that I saw, he was carrying a bag and I thought, you have to watch out for the civilians and I was thinking, maybe I should take his bag and throw it in the water, because I didn't know what it was. Then I thought maybe of throwing him in the water. Then I said, "No. He's walking south. I'll work north and get away from him."

I remember discussing with other guys that maybe there is people around that would shoot us. Then we went over closer to the water and there was a barge there. I remember thinking, this might be an oil barge and there might be a bomb on it. So we started walking back towards West Street. Then I was thinking, we can't go close to the buildings

Reynolds

because if more planes come. So we kind of just all were walking around dazed and I ran into a Battalion Chief. I don't know who he was. I said to him, I said, "Chief, they're evacuating the other building; right?" He said, "No."

Q. You're talking about the north tower now; right?

A. Before the north tower fell. He said, "No." I said, "Why not? They blew up the other one." I thought they blew it up with a bomb.

I said, "If they blew up the one, you know they're gonna blow up the other one." He said, "No, they're not." I said, "Well, you gotta tell them to evacuate it, because it's gonna fall down and you gotta get the guys out." Because I had felt there were hundreds of firemen who died in the first tower and thousands of people. He said, "I'm just the Battalion Chief. I can't order that." I remember looking at the radio on him and I said, "You got a fucking radio and you got a fucking mouth. Use the fucking things. Empty this fucking building." Again he said, "I'm just a Battalion Chief. I can't do that."

So I walked back by the water. We were all

Reynolds

basically just somewhat in visual site of each other, us and 22 Truck, some of the guys from 22 Truck. I had known, at that time, that all of the guys of the 22 truck had gotten out. We were walking around very numb. I knew I was in shock, but there was nothing I could do about it.

So eventually this other chief came back and said, "They are evacuating this tower." I said, "Oh, that's great." And sometime after that I watched from the, I guess, by the Winter Garden area, I watched the north tower fall. It was expected so it wasn't as traumatic as the first one to me. Then that Battalion Chief came back again with his clip board and he said, "We need volunteers to go back in and check the perimeter for survivors." He emphasized that we didn't have to go in, but if we would he would appreciate it.

So he took the names of us in 76 Engine and we went back in. I believe it was at Vesey Street we got up to about Washington and a Deputy Chief met us there and said that he wanted us to go back up West Street and regroup and we'd take it from there. Basically while we were in that area, Washington and Vesey, it was just everything burning on the ground

Reynolds

and around us and the dust, and it was no apparent people laying around that was visible. So we walked up West and I think we got to the area of Stuyvesant High School and basically that's where I spent a good amount of time. I don't think anything much after that should be relevant, because I didn't come back down to that area again of the World Trade Center for many hours.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. Thank you, Bill. I appreciate your cooperation.

File No. 9110290

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KENNETH ROGERS

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

K. ROGERS

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: December 10, 2001.

The time is 10:48 a.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Kenny Rogers, Firefighter first from Ladder 16 in the quarters of Ladder 16.

Q. All right Kenny, please give me any information you have regarding the events of September 11.

A. At about a quarter to nine, high rise, Engine 39 responded to the first plane crash into the World Trade Center. We turned on the TV and we were watching because it was newsworthy and we saw the second plane hit and almost immediately, we were told to respond down there. We had trouble getting out of quarters and we were delayed a bit and 13 and 22 in the Battalion were ahead of us, got ahead of us. I saw them pass us on the corner. We wound up following them down, downtown. Wound up on West Street going south and we followed them for as far as we could. We got down further than I thought we did, because we passed a lot of rigs and eventually we couldn't go any further.

There we disembarked and we walked south. We went down to West Street, to the command post, and then

K. ROGERS

we passed in front of 2 World Financial Center, by a garage bay. We were just standing there and 13 and 22 were there, a big group were sent in ahead of us. We should have been in their place but because we arrived a step behind them, they went in ahead of us. We just stood by and waited. I think we were waiting for another truck company to fill us out. We were going to get the next assignment. We sort of had the nod but we didn't have the wave yet.

Watching the building, mostly the south tower. There were people jumping, someone said we are going to go a long way up, let's take off some of our gear. At first I didn't, but after a while I thought he was probably right because it was getting heavy. So I took off some stuff and he took off some stuff. Some other guys did.

Meanwhile we were standing there with about five companies and we were just waiting for our assignment and then there was an explosion in the south tower, which according to this map, this exposure just blew out in flames. A lot of guys left at that point. I kept watching. Floor after floor after floor. One floor under another after another and when it hit about the fifth floor, I figured it was a bomb, because it

K. ROGERS

looked like a synchronized deliberate kind of thing. I was there in '93.

I went down to the garage bay. Most guys were down already. The Lieutenant had been yelling at the command post, run, run, run. The only person I saw come in with us was a Chief and the rest of them didn't come in. The companies just scattered everywhere. I think we had maybe nine people with us and there had to be four in the beginning. All these other companies just scattered. We didn't know where they were. They didn't come down with us. We had two people, I think, from other companies, different companies. One guy was from a truck. I think the other another guy was Steve Wright. An injured person with us, a big fat guy and I found an ambulance cot at the bottom of that ramp.

We put him on that. We moved a truck away from the loading bay, because it had the key in it. We put him up on the loading dock and then we put him into a freight elevator, but the Lieutenant said I don't want everyone on that elevator. We don't know how well it works. He turned out to be right. Because it didn't -- it malfunctioned. It went down instead of up and the guys were lucky to get off it. Steve Wright was on that elevator. Two people were on it, the guy

K. ROGERS

from the other company, Steve Wright, and the injured guy. The injured guy couldn't walk and he had a broken arm.

The Lieutenant said okay, we are going to have to carry him up the stairs. I should say that he already had a roll call after the dust cleared. We were missing one guy. Then he had another roll call back by the stairwell, hoping the guy might be back by the stairwell, but he wasn't there either.

We decided to carry this guy up the stairwell. One of the guys from the other company said there is a way out, out of the building, that goes out the back. We decided we were going to go that way. We tried to pick this guy up. The stairwell was narrow. We couldn't all get our hands on it. The guy was very big. Eventually we got him up several flights of stairs. We got him out the back of the building and we put him on a boat going over to New Jersey somewhere.

Then we went back from North Cove harbor, we went back to the building and the second collapse occurred when -- the three of us were in the back of the building; myself, Oscar and Joe Petrich. There was a really heavy draft. My helmet just flew off into this black curtain of soot behind the building and on

K. ROGERS

the back of the building there was an overhang, so I didn't really want to go into either one of those places, but then I was worried about the glass flying around inside the building. So the thing to do, I figured, was to just stay where I was, where I had the most places to go and see what would happen.

What happened was it subsided. I didn't have a turnout coat at this time. I didn't get cut up so it turned out to be the best thing to do was just to wait and see where the best place (inaudible). That's how it worked out for me with the second collapse.

Then we went back into the building to find the Lieutenant. At this time, there was still lights in the stairwell. There was a lot of water running down the stairs, so we knew the building had some kind of damage. I went down to a lower level, which I hadn't been to before, below the loading bay, where we had been originally. There was no access in the loading bay anywhere else. It was just one level that went down. I was hoping there was, because I was hoping I could hide down there.

Someone located him and yelled down the stairwell, we found him, we got him. So we went back, we all regrouped and then we went up the ramp to go out

K. ROGERS

to the front of the building where we had come in. We were looking for the guy we were missing. The Lieutenant and some people were off to the left and me and Joe Petrich went to the right of the bay to the left and we went up there. We kind of searched quite a bit of the building looking for people. We didn't see anybody except one guy with a camera. I don't know where he came from. He was taking a picture of the World Trade Center collapse I guess. He was okay though.

When we left the building, then we saw a couple of other firemen starting to come in to search. We told them we have looked around already. We knew we were the first guys there because there was no foot prints in the dust or anything. There was a lot of dust in the exposure, blown in windows on that side of the building.

After that, we went back into the building. We went out the back. We skirted North Cove harbor and we went to a street, which I guess was North End, and then we went to Vesey Street and we turned right. We ran into a guy. The Lieutenant asked him where is the command post. The guy said I'm it. So we figured the command post was in a lot of trouble, because we could

K. ROGERS

see them from where we had been in our staging area. Now there didn't seem to be a command post any more.

Anyway, we found a place on Vesey, somebody forced their way into it. It was a place called Chevy's. We went in there. We were very happy to see people come in. We -- like 39 Engine, we heard them give a Mayday and they weren't responding to any radio transmissions so we thought they might be all dead.

One of the guys came in from 39, a couple of guys came in and started wandering in and it was just good to see these guys were okay. We stayed there for a while. That was pretty much the events of that day for us.

After that, we sort of went back to the school. We went into the school. There was another collapse of another building, but we were too far away to be affected by that. We went back to the rig and we washed the rig down. It turned out that --

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you Kenny.

The time now is 11:13. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110291

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL BRODBECK

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today is December 10, 2001. It's 1645 hours. This is Battalion Chief Steven King from Safety Battalion FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter First Grade Michael Brodbeck from Engine Company 210. He was working a mutual in Ladder 1106 on September 11th as the can man. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Okay, Mike.

A. Right after the first plane hit the north tower, we were dispatched and we were first ticket. We jumped on the rig and started going over the Brooklyn Bridge. At this time we were still unaware it was actually a large plane until we got around three-quarters of the way over the Brooklyn Bridge and they confirmed it was a commercial airliner. The 2nd Battalion aide, I believe, was screaming on the radio about the jumpers up and down.

I think we arrived down Cortlandt Street, which was facing Two World Trade, and pretty much the way you see that second plane hit on the videotape was the way we were facing that

tower.

As the second plane hit, the chauffeur, which was Artie Riccio, did a U turn around Century 21, which I believe is near One Liberty Plaza over there. We came around, and I think we came down Vesey Street, where our rig was.

We grabbed our gear, carried extra cylinders. I had the can and had my hook. We walked around, I think down Vesey to West Street. We made a left and we came to the north tower. We proceeded to wait until jumpers were down. We went into the lobby. We arrived in the lobby, awaiting instruction.

We awaited instruction from the chiefs. We went with I believe it was Chief Picciotto. I don't know if that's exactly him, but I think I recognized him. He was on the television and stuff.

We went up to the mezzanine, and we took an elevator. The chief said that these elevators were all right. We took the elevator which I believe goes up to eight. We got off at eight and proceeded to walk up to 23. We stopped on 23, and then we went up to 25. Then we made

our way back down.

So we were either on 23 or 21. I don't know. I don't remember that. I think it was 23. The lieutenant gave us instructions to make a thorough search, pop all the doors, make sure everybody is out of the building.

Me and the irons man went. I left my can and I took the Halligan. He had the router tool. We probably popped at least 10 or 15 doors making a search.

Q. On what floor?

A. On 23 or 21. I'm still confused about that. I believe it was 23.

At this point after we made a thorough search, we located together via the stairwell. At that point, unbeknownst to us, the south tower fell. We didn't know that the south tower fell. I didn't have a radio because I had the can. But I heard there was a collapse in the north tower between the 68th and 70th floor.

When we heard the evacuation, we started our way down. At this point we were still unaware that the other tower went down. We were in the stairwell. We all regrouped at the

stairwell before the tower went down. When it went down, like everybody else says, it was like an earthquake. The building went six feet to the right, six feet to the left.

We started to make our way down, a very slow process. Once the maydays kept coming over, guys were just stopping in the stairwell. At approximately the 18th floor, the other members of Ladder 110 started carrying a woman down in a chair. I was walking down with another woman I believe from 18 to like 12, and she went with two other members. I forget which engine company. They walked her down.

I picked up another civilian at 10. I walked her down. She was with two civilians. I walked her down. She was hyperventilating. She thought she was having a heart attack. So I put my mask on her, because the dust from the other tower was starting to come up into the other building. This was probably around like the sixth floor where the dust started getting bad. I gave her my mask from like ten down because she was just trying to catch her breath.

We went down -- this was the B

stairwell. We got down to the lobby. I was a little bit ahead of 110 while they were carrying the other woman down. When I got down to the lobby, I asked the woman if she was okay. The two civilians told me that they would take her. She went with the two civilians.

I went and caught up with Ladder 110 and walked out of the north tower, which I believe was at least 25 minutes just to get down from up there. We walked out into the street under the overpass, the northern walkway on West Street.

We got out to one of the rigs and put our gear down. Lieutenant Wayne Mera -- at this point we still didn't know the other tower went down. The north tower is ahead of the south tower. So as we walked out, we're still pretty much clueless about the other tower going down.

We made our way under that overpass. We stopped there. Lieutenant Mera said he didn't like this, where we were standing. We started to walk north on West Street. We probably got maybe 50 yards, they were like two red lights, and we stopped again. We put all our equipment down.

One guy took his mask off.

At that point the north tower collapsed. From the time we walked out of the tower to this point had to be less than five minutes, maybe like three minutes by the time -- it happened very quickly.

At that point we all pretty much scattered and ran. I ran north on West Street. I put my mask on. The vibra-alert was going off. I had no air left because I gave it to that woman on the walk down.

The dust ball came down and hit us. I ran in complete darkness and wound up running face first into the building before the Verizon building on Vesey. I was actually trying to break through the glass.

At the time I dislocated my shoulder. I was running. I dislocated my shoulder. I was trying to break through the glass with my left arm. Then the door flew open. I happened to be banging on the door. The door swung open and knocked me on my butt.

Two firemen from 305 Engine dragged me in there, which I believe is Six World Trade in

the customs building right there. It was either that or the telephone building. I'm not too sure. Two firemen dragged me in there.

At that point I was trying to get in touch with my battalion to find out if those guys lived or whatever. We all met up at what I believe was West Street and Murray, that bridge that goes over, that other one. Near like Stuyvesant High School, we met up there.

That was it pretty much, from collapse purposes. I don't know if you want me to go on.

Q. Did you see anybody there, any specific individuals at any point?

A. That ain't here no more? I walked out with someone from 65 Engine that I grew up with. I haven't seen him in two years. We happened to hit the lobby doors going out.

On the way up we were with 21 Engine. A guy from 21, I played football with, he was with me going up. When we were coming out, they were ahead of us. I remember seeing Billy Burke, the captain who got killed. I think he went left, because they all went right with us. I assume he might have gone over to where the

command post was or whatever.

That's like the overview. When we first got to the front of the north tower, I was watching people jump. We were actually waiting to see if anybody was coming out of the building on the West Street side to make sure we weren't hit.

Q. When you were on the 23rd floor doing a search, what were the conditions?

A. Fine. Nothing up there.

Q. No smoke? No sign of water flowing anywhere?

A. No, not at all.

Q. The stairwell dry?

A. The stairwell was dry. No water.

Q. Do you remember what stairwell you were in?

A. I believe B.

Q. B?

A. We came down B. From what I understand, it was the only one that was not obstructed. It was a good thing we were going down B. When we were going up, there didn't seem to be that many firemen. I believe we were

probably one of the first 15 units on the scene.
We got there pretty quick.

I happened to see that thing on CNN
from 7 Engine. They were on 21. I didn't see
them. I'm pretty sure it was 23 that we were on.
There's a lot of doors. We popped a ton of
doors, looking for people.

To be honest with you, I remember
looking out the window and seeing that command
post on West Street, thinking it wasn't a good
idea to be there. I've been on six years. When
I looked down, it didn't seem like a real bright
place to have one. Little things like that stuck
out in my mind. When I looked out on that, I
felt uncomfortable about that.

We were so in the dark about the other
tower going down, we walked out of the north
tower and I looked south and I just saw the
Marriott Hotel, the corner of it. I remember
saying to myself the Marriott took a beating from
all the debris falling. You just saw the corner
of it from that angle coming back.

So up until the point where the north
tower went down, we didn't --

Q. You didn't notice that tower came down at all?

A. We didn't know that at all.

Q. You didn't feel that or hear that?

A. Oh, no, we felt it. We were in the north tower, and we were in the stairwell. When that tower went down, our tower went six feet to the right, six feet to the left, and we felt the debris falling, but it felt like an earthquake. I've never been in a big collapse. I thought --

Q. You didn't know the tower came down?

A. No. What I heard over the radio was that it was a collapse from the 68th through 70th floors. I thought that's what was -- that much of a rumble and everything else, you know. Until afterwards, like I said, I dislocated my shoulder.

So after the collapse, after I left that building and I got back with 110, a doctor from Hazollah came over and put me in a sling. I stood on West Street for like an hour and a half fighting with the lieutenant not to get on the ambulance.

Then the F-16 flew overhead, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] They convinced me to go. I didn't want to go, but I was useless anyway after that. I was taken to St. Vincent's Hospital. I was taken to Chelsea Piers first. They had triage, and they popped my shoulder back in. I was taken to St. Vincent's.

I didn't get back to Brooklyn until 6:00 or 7:00. I was taken to Metrotech. I was with John Feehan. They brought me back to the division, I was with him, and they brought us back to Metrotech. From Metrotech I just walked over to 110 and went to sleep.

That's pretty much it.

Q. Okay, Mike.

CHIEF KING: The time is 1700 hours,
and this interview is concluded

File No. 9110292

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STANLEY TROJANOWSKI

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is December 10th. It's 1813 hours this is Battalion Chief Malkin, Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with firefighter Stanley Trojanowski, first grade, Engine 238. We're at the quarters of 238. There's nobody else present in the room. This interview is related to the events of September 11th, and what follows is the interview.

Q. You start out from in quarters. When did you get the run?

A. We received the run a little after 9:00. We responded on the fifth alarm to the initial building that was hit by the airplane. We made our way down Barclay Street. We tried to make a left-hand turn on West Side Highway or West Street, but it was all congested with traffic. So we left the rig on West Street. Actually I stayed with the rig on West, between Barclay and Vesey on West.

The guys responded to the command post which is at Liberty Street and West, and I stayed with the rig. I hooked up, got a little bit of

pressure, just enough for an inch and three-quarter, which wasn't even sufficient because it read zero from the hydrant pressure on the gauge. I had a little bit of water. So I tried to be prepared there.

That's it. Later on to see what was going on, I listened to the radio. I saw some people jumping eventually. First I thought it was debris from the airplane that hit or maybe from the building itself, or birds. Once the people got closer, I could see they were actual human beings.

After the collapse of number Two World Trade Center, which I actually thought was a bomb that went off because the north tower was blocking my view, debris and everything started falling, people were running. I hid underneath the scaffolding on Barclay; I'm pretty much sure it was Barclay and West.

Things cleared up a little. I started up the stair and tried to wash off anyone that was still trying to escape from the collapse and tried to help as many people as I could, this and that.

I tried to contact the company. I was pretty much sure I made contact. Someone responded. I remember hearing "Engine 238," but it sort of seemed like a response to my calling them. I heard everyone was supposedly all right, which wasn't true, which might not even been a response to my calls on the handy talky.

The north tower came down, and I got hit with some debris. I remember getting banged up to the divider by the rig which was in the street. I made my way underneath the scaffolding again and just tried to outlast the collapse, which I thought was just another bomb going off.

I'm trying to remember of anyone who's still missing or was missing that I had seen. I can't recall.

Q. Did your unit come back, your guys come back to the rig at some time?

A. After the second collapse I radioed again to see if they're okay. I had a response, or all I caught was part of a response. I thought it was them again. So I started looking around for them. I went to the north overpass.

The response supposedly mentioned they

were at the north overpass. I looked around underneath the overpass, because it was partially collapsed on the south side, rigs sticking out on the north side, burning, this and that. No one there.

I was trying to put out some fires. I used about 20 extinguishers. I tried to put out car fires there, and some of the rigs burning. I tried to keep it from escalating even worse just in case we had people trapped in there still alive so they don't burn to death.

The debris on Vesey between Vesey and number Seven World Trade Center, three and a half was the seven, and a couple of civilians helped me stretch that. We had a little bit of water in the three and a half that was stretched from another company north of me on West Street. The tower ladder was in front of Six World Trade Center, I guess, because it was just north of the pedestrian bridge. We couldn't put it out. It was five or six stories high, the debris, I'm going to say.

I helped tried to get a couple of firemen out of the debris and managed to work

with other firemen to get one fireman out. He was in cardiac arrest, bleeding. About five surgeons were dropped off in the area that came over to me, asking where they could respond, where they could help, this and that.

I knew the command post on Liberty Street was annihilated or whatever you want to call it. One of them went with the ambulance with an unconscious fireman to the hospital. The other one -- I had no clue where the command post was because there's no way of getting through on the radio.

Q. Right.

A. There were all the important messages, maydays and everything. Unless you have a mayday I guess you don't want to interrupt important transmissions. So I just kept on looking for our guys, which took a while for me to find, a couple hours. I went all around.

Q. You walked around looking for them?

A. Yeah. I went and actually met up with some of the guys from our firehouse on Church Street. The last transmission I heard was north of the pedestrian overpass, the north overpass.

I walked around there for a while, asked the guys that I knew. They said they had seen two of our guys, so I knew at least two of the guys were alive. I just kept on looking. When we met up, we came back to West Street where my rig was just to see what I could do.

There were a lot of things in between that come to my mind now. I helped them stretch a line from the rig north of me to the tower ladder. Everyone was doing what they could. Later on we helped a marine company, because we had no supply of water at all on the west side. So we helped the marine company with three and a half inch hose. We got them off other rigs. We supplied a pumper, I guess it would be, on North End Avenue.

Q. Stretched a line from the marine company onto North End Avenue?

A. North End Avenue. We managed to get a pumper that was still working. We drove it over there. A chauffeur from that company stayed with that. Actually he wasn't the chauffeur that responded with the company, but he was from that company and he was a chauffeur.

So he manned that rig while we helped to stretch a three and a half from that pumper to the other pumper which was closer to West. I was like in-line pumping to get some supply of water.

Q. After the tower two went down, where were you after the first one went down?

A. I was there the whole time.

Q. Still up by Barclay Street?

A. Yeah, at Barclay. That's where our rig was, on West between Vesey and Barclay; actually closer to Barclay, close to the corner.

Q. Right.

A. Because the hydrant I had was around the corner on Barclay.

Q. Did you ever see the command post where Ganci was or the chaplain or anything?

A. No.

Q. After the first building went down, did you see companies, where they were, any particular firemen or companies, where they were working or anything like that? No, you were remote; right? At least a block away?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay.

A. There were a lot of cops in the area.

Q. Yeah.

A. Scattering.

Q. How did you wrap it up? Total debris, you were hooked up over here, you stretched all these lines? You worked there into the night, would you say? You worked there all day?

A. Yeah, I was there. Yeah, I was there until Wednesday. I found our officer just south of the pedestrian north overpass.

Q. Late in the day when you found him?

A. Yeah. Actually someone else mentioned they found him late in the day. It was dark already.

Q. Did 238 guys get together all at once or in dribs and drabs they got together or did you find each other at the scene?

A. Yeah, we were looking for each other. Actually everybody was looking for each other, from what I heard.

Q. How late did you stay at the scene?

A. Until Wednesday. I got banged around a little when the second one came down, the north one. There was debris flying this and there.

I really don't like to talk about it
much.

CHIEF MALKIN: This concludes the
interview with fireman Trojanowski, Engine
238. I thank him for the interview. The
time is now 1826 hours.

File No. 9110293

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DAVID KELNHOFER

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

D. KELNHOFER

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 10th, 2001. The time is 1815 hours and this is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter David Kelnhofer from Engine 221, control man on September 11th, 2001. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Okay, Dave. You can start whenever you want.

A. Basically, we came to work that morning. Everything was normal. We saw on the TV that the first tower was hit. We normally go into Manhattan, so we started to get ready, figuring that we were going to get sent there. Then we saw the second plane had hit, and right after we saw that on the TV, we got the ticket over the computer to go to Manhattan. So we grabbed our stuff. Pauley Warhola, who was getting off the night before, had jumped on our rig as an extra man, as a fifth man.

We went down. We were told to go over the Manhattan Bridge. We went over the Manhattan Bridge. We ended up parking the rig on Broadway close to Dey Street, I believe, looking at the map here, and we left the rig with the chauffeur there. Then we walked down

D. KELNHOFER

Dey Street, I believe, or Fulton, down Vesey. We were told to report to the command center by the World Financial Center on the opposite side of the Trade Center. We walked completely around and ended up right by the World Financial Center, I believe it was the first one, right in front of the north tower.

We stopped there. We took our gear off to take a break while the captain went up to get an assignment from the command post. He went up to the command post, got an assignment, came back. We were supposed to go into the south tower, I believe. Just as we started to put our gear back on, the first tower collapsed.

We ran down the loading ramp of the building, through the loading ramp, up the opposite side of the building, up the stairway. We tried to get out the stairway in the rear of the building. We were trapped there for a while and then finally it cleared a little bit. We made our way out of the building, across the courtyard and down towards the piers, through the marina and down towards the piers.

Okay. Here is the building here, yes, the second World Financial Center. That's the building there. We made it through there. We ended up on the

D. KELNHOFER

piers with a group of, I guess, like 100 firemen. We stopped there for a minute. Then we regrouped. We got all our men together because we were separated a little bit.

We started to make our way back down to the basement to recover some gear. We figured we'd go help in the rescue operation. Before we could do that, the second building came down. We ended up going back towards the pier, towards the water. We stood there for a little while, regrouped again.

We left there, went back to the building, made our way into that basement with a search rope, recovered our gear, came back out, and then we were told to go on West Street to the new command post. We stood at West Street for a while for another assignment. That's basically it.

Q. You didn't really see any guys, individuals you remember who might be missing?

A. No, nothing like that. We went in front of the command post that everybody got killed at, but we were waiting. The captain went up to the command post to get the assignment. We kind of waited in the back. So I really didn't see anybody actually at the command post. We were on the other side of the street.

D. KELNHOFER

We had picked another guy up. I don't know whether he was lost or came in on his own. I don't remember his name. He stayed with us most of the time, until the collapse, he went to the pier, and then he ended up regrouping with somebody else, I don't know whether his own company or what.

Q. Do you know his company?

A. No. I'm not sure.

Q. Sounds like a guy I talked to the other night from either 211 or 119.

A. No. I would have remembered that. It definitely wasn't a company around the battalion here because I would have remembered that. But he was kind of lost, so he hooked up with us. The captain said "follow me" just so at least someone had a record of him being with somebody. The captain probably would remember. But after the first one collapsed and we ran through the building, we kind of lost him.

Q. Okay.

A. That's about it. We ended up staying at West Street for a while. They didn't have an assignment for us, so we worked our way back to Broadway. We found our rig. We didn't find our chauffeur. We found out later the chauffeur was hurt in the collapse, that he

D. KELNHOFER

was taken in an ambulance. So we had gotten back on our rig and we ended up doing a four-pumper relay.

Q. Who was your chauffeur?

A. Warren Monroe. He was hurt. He'll be out on three-quarters. He's still in therapy.

We ended up getting our pumper back, getting it operational, and we were doing a four-pumper relay to a tower ladder and a hand line into the Trade Center. They were doing a rescue operation and a tower ladder operation. So we were working both of those. I was working I think it was Squad 44 rig. I'm pretty sure that's what it was. I was working that rig. One of our chauffeurs that came afterwards took our rig, and then there were two other pumpers, 290 and somebody else down the road. Because the hydrants were so far away, we had four pumpers feeding the tower ladder and the rescue hand line.

We stayed there until about 8:00, 9:00 o'clock in the morning, and then we worked our way back to the firehouse. That's about it.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: All right, Dave.
Thank you. The time is 1821 hours and this interview is concluded.

File No. 9110294

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOSEPH RAE

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

J. RAE

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 10th, 2001. The time is 2:30 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER RAE: Joseph Rae, Engine 255.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: This is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you could tell us in your own words, Joe, what happened.

A. Myself, Steve Altini from 24 Engine and Craig Monahan from 5 Truck took Craig's truck into the Trade Center. We came through the Battery Tunnel. We drove north on West to about I'd say 90 West is the building where we pulled over and there's green scaffolding there. We pulled over. We got out of the pickup. Steve Altini went to 10 and 10 to get gear. Me and Craig Monahan got out of the rig. We put our gear on and we started walking north on West Street.

As we kept approaching towards the Trade Center, there were all the rigs parked left and right. We went under the first pedestrian bridge, which would be about Liberty Street. We knew they were riding heavy, the engines and trucks, because we were looking

J. RAE

for masks and tools and there were no masks. Even the four-man engines didn't have any masks in them, and I knew they were riding heavy because it was change of tours.

When we got about, I would say, the Vista Hotel, right there, we saw the 1st Battalion parked there and we saw I think it was 10 Truck. I'm not too sure. There was a truck parked there. We kept walking. We got to about, I would say, probably around the second pedestrian bridge, over there, where we encountered Rescue 1, the 2nd Battalion, we saw 5 Truck, we saw 3 Truck, I think 1 Engine was there, too, and in front of that was 18 Engine, which was towards the south. That's where we found our masks. We took the masks out of 18 Engine.

We put the masks on. We started walking north to just about the second footbridge, which would be 6 World Trade, and all of a sudden we heard the explosion and the building started to come down and I ran up --

Q. Which tower?

A. 2 World Trade Center started to collapse. We ran and I dove under a rig and I lost sight of Craig Monahan. I don't know where he went. I dove under a

J. RAE

rig. I'm not sure what the number was, but I dove under a rig. It came down. I got back up. After about ten minutes, it cleared. There was a hose line in the street. We were hosing each other off.

I met up with Craig Monahan again and he said come on, come on, let's take 5 Truck's rig because there's guys on 6 World Trade, on the Customs Building, there's a little balcony there. So we moved the tiller. He told me turn the wheel all the way to the right. We backed the rig up. We put the rig up. We put the ladder up. There was a couple of Port Authority cops, a couple of firemen, I'm not too sure from where.

We got up the pedestal, and then the second one came down, and once it started to come down, we ran. I ran up north towards about Vesey Street where 12 Truck was parked on the corner of Vesey on, it would be the east side of the street. I dove under there and then the Trade Center, the second one came down. That would be 1 World Trade came down. We climbed out of there and we started walking back to see where all the collapses were.

What I forgot to mention was, when we were walking north before the first collapse, I actually saw

J. RAE

that command post. I saw Chief Ganci. There were I'd say about maybe eight people there. I saw Chief Ganci. I saw Chief Feehan. The two of them were there. They were actually moving the command post back a little ways because they were moving it with maybe his driver or something. But they were all standing there and they were trying to push the thing back.

After the first collapse, I didn't see the command post after that. After the second one collapsed, I crawled out of 12 Truck and we started back to see if we could find anybody because it was only me -- I lost sight of Craig Monahan after the second collapse. It was only me and two or three Port Authority cops and a civilian. That was all that was left that I saw from where I was standing, which would be the second footbridge by 6 World Trade, north. There was nobody else standing after that.

So then we went back. We got through, and I met with Ray Reilly, who was a Lieutenant in 248, and we were trying to get up onto 6 World Trade because there was a guy on the top floor of 6 World Trade hanging out the window. So I tried to move 12 Truck. I couldn't get 12 Truck started. It wouldn't move. Then all of a sudden the chauffeur came and moved it,

J. RAE

but they still couldn't get it. They still couldn't get him.

So we took the portable ladder off of 24 Engine's rig, put it up there, and we started up, where I met with my captain and a couple of guys from 255 up there, and we took a window and we went inside of 6 World Trade Center. They were carrying out the guy from Rescue 1. I don't know his name. But they were carrying him out. We helped them carry him out, and then we stretched a hand line into 6 World Trade Center to about the 4th floor to knock down some fire. Then we went back down and we were knocking all the car fires down and we were just looking for people.

We scuttled back towards what would be like where the Winter Garden is, over there, and that's where I met up with the rest of the guys from 255 and Ladder 157, and we started digging and we found Chief Ganci and Chief Feehan there. Then after that we just kept just digging for people, you know, for the brothers.

Actually, it all happened so fast. They say it took like 40 minutes between or whatever. Still it was just very fast the way everything went. Then I was there until 9:00, 9:30 at night. I got there about,

J. RAE

I'd say, right before the first collapse, enough time for me to get out of the truck, walk north with my gear on, right under the footbridge, right to about here, to about right in front of the 6 World Financial Center, when No. 2 World Trade Center came down. That was it.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Thanks, Joe.

That concludes our interview. It's 2:37 p.m.

File No. 9110295

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CHRISTOPHER FENYO

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

C. FENYO

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 11, 2001. The time is 12:31. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Christopher Fenyo of Engine 35 in the quarters of Engine 35.

Q. Chris, just tell us what you saw on September 11th.

A. This is Firefighter 6th Grade Christopher Fenyo. I live at North Moore and Greenwich Street. On the morning of September 11, I had dropped my girlfriend off at the subway at Chambers and walked home, and at a quarter to 9:00 I was in the elevator of my building when the first plane hit. I didn't hear anything. We face north.

When I got into the apartment, I heard FD going down the West Side Highway. I pretty much figured the only ones that go down the West Side Highway are probably rescue, so I took a look out the window to see if they were going to a job nearby. I saw a few hundred people standing in Greenwich Street pointing up, so I figured there was a job and I'd go buff it out. I still had no idea.

So I took the elevator down. I walked out

C. FENYO

onto Greenwich Street and I looked up and saw the north tower, this is about maybe five to 9:00. I ran back into my apartment, up ten flights of stairs, grabbed my backup gear and started running down Greenwich Street. At this point there were about ten floors of fire and my first thought was I have no idea how we're going to put this out. I got about three blocks running flat out and I saw a guy on a motorcycle and we both had the same idea. He told me to jump on. He drove me down to Vesey and West.

At the corner of Vesey and West, I went up to the first Battalion Chief I saw and asked him what I should do. He said to stand fast at the manpower pool and he pointed to a spot about 100 feet away from him where there were some men gathering.

As rigs came down the West Side Highway, I kept going up to them asking if there was an extra helmet. I finally got some luck with Engine 39. They were already in the building, so I was with the chauffeur, Arthur, for that time being.

There was an explosion at the top of the Trade Center and a piece of Trade Center flew across the West Side Highway and hit the Financial Center, and Arthur went to hook up with another chauffeur to the

C. FENYO

Financial Center. His rig was parked in the southbound lanes of the West Side Highway just north of the north pedestrian bridge.

At this point a Battalion Chief looked at me, saw 39 on my helmet and told me to move my rig in front of 1 World Trade Center to supply water to the standpipe. I said yes, sir, but I didn't want to move the rig. Even though I wasn't 39, I probably could have moved the rig. I back-pedaled, looked around the rig to see Arthur. As I was coming back to the front of the rig, the Battalion Chief, I guess he got a little impatient. He jumped in the rig and moved it himself over to in front of 1 World Trade Center.

About 30 seconds later, Arthur came back and looked at me and said where the hell is the rig? I said it's across the street. At that point the rig was essentially in a hailstorm of glass. There were bodies hitting the canopy of the Marriott at that point, I guess, right between 1 and 3 World Trade, or actually that was the canopy of 1 World Trade. He saw the situation, saw we weren't going to be able to hook up without getting hurt, so we ran across the West Side Highway, jumped in the rig, and we pulled it back across the highway to the southbound side just north of

C. FENYO

the pedestrian bridge, as it was before, only now the rig was facing north.

When I stepped off the rig, probably about 20 after, 25 after 9:00, I ran into George Reese of 80 Engine, who was also off duty. He was responding into his second job when he came up from the subway. He had gone to the quarters at 10 and 10 and gotten gear. At that point I told Arthur that I had met someone from my company and that I was going to go with him. He said be safe, and I went off with George Reese to the command post on the loading dock between 3 and 2 World Financial Center, just underneath the Winter Garden, where Chief Ganci had his command post at the top of the ramp.

We were there for about ten minutes. George went off to talk to the Chiefs to find out what we could do. I was standing there alone. There were several companies down the ramp behind me. One of them I believe was 76 Engine, there was 211 Engine, about 50, 60 men, various states of dress.

About a couple minutes after George came back to me is when the south tower from our perspective exploded from about midway up the building. We all turned and ran into the garage. At that point I banked

C. FENYO

down to the floor. We were trapped for a little while in there. We went off to the right. There's a big, big loading dock underneath there. You could probably fit three or four tractor-trailers with the doors closed.

We ran off into a dead end, realized it. At that point the smoke had gotten down to the floor and someone, who I found out later was the engine officer from 76 Engine, had put down a search rope. A lot of us got out through the staircase by that rope. At that point we discovered that we were inside a fire staircase with all metal doors, metal frames, opening outward, and none of us had tools. There were a lot of calls down to go get tools. But at some point there was a facilities guy there from the Financial Center who had a key. He let us out on the water side of 2 World Financial in between 2 and the Winter Garden.

At that point there was a lot of confusion. There was heavy ash in the air and on the ground. We made our way over towards the river. At that point there were a lot of guys cut up, some broken bones, a lot of civilians getting on the ferries. We helped some of the civilians get on the ferries.

At that point a debate began to rage because

C. FENYO

the perception was that the building looked like it had been taken out with charges. We had really no concept of the damage on the east side of 2 World Trade Center at that point, and at that point many people had felt that possibly explosives had taken out 2 World Trade, and officers were gathering companies together and the officers were debating whether or not to go immediately back in or to see what was going to happen with 1 World Trade at that point. The debate ended pretty quickly because 1 World Trade came down.

At that point we ran up through Battery Park, through the north part of Battery Park, where I lost George because I stopped to pick up a civilian who had sprained her ankle and wasn't able to run. At that point, after carrying her up to Chambers Street and the water, her friends assisted her, I believe, onto a ferry at that point. But we were out of the danger of the collapse of 1 World Trade.

I made my way around to Stuyvesant High School. I still wasn't able to find George. I learned later on that he was all right. He had hooked up with another company and they had gone back and started working on Vesey near the Customs Building. I made my way with 211 Engine and a couple of other folks. We

C. FENYO

essentially just picked gear from here and there,
picked up masks, picked up gloves, picked up bottles,
tools, and we worked the rest of the night. That's
pretty much it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. The time now
is 12:39 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110296

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FRANK MACCHIA

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 10:53 a.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan, safety battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with Frank Macchia, firefighter 1st, from Ladder 43 in the quarters of Ladder 43.

Q. Frank, just explain to us what you saw on September 11.

A. After arriving on the Westside Highway, what I know to be the collapse, after the collapse of the south tower, Ladder 43 and myself were in a position approximately between north of Vesey Street on West Street when Tower No. 1 collapsed.

At that point, once we had donned our masks and retreated to Barclay Street to allow some dust to settle, to make sure that we weren't caught in any debris, and then advanced out to the corner of West Street and Vesey Street.

At that point, myself, Firefighter Suden, Firefighter Regan were ordered by the chief to place into operation a pumper to extinguish Fire Department vehicles and to make searches of those vehicles. We did so and operated that line for approximately 30 to

Macchia

45 minutes, simultaneously searching any rigs that we extinguished, mostly Fire Department vehicles.

Twelve truck was not on fire. We searched that rig, Haz-Mat, both Haz-Mat rigs, 132 truck and a few rigs that were underneath the pedestrian bridge south of Vesey Street.

Q. Were all the searches negative?

A. All the searches were negative except for a Police Department vehicle where we extricated a Police Department -- I'm guessing a plainclothes detective or plainclothes officer.

At that point, after approximately 45 minutes, myself and Firefighter Long following Lieutenant Rohan, John Colon and Firefighter Frederickson up a ladder onto the mezzanine of World Trade Center No. 6, U.S. Customs building.

We transported stretchers, a power saw and a few Stokes baskets up that ladder by orders of a chief -- at this time, I don't recall his name -- and proceeded to search in that building, and those searches were positive.

We did find a battalion chief and his aide just inside World Trade Center No. 6. At that point, myself and Firefighter Long, along with -- there were a

Macchia

couple of other firemen up there, a chief. We operated with him, searched into the World Trade Center No. 6 building.

Q. The members you found, were they alive or --

A. Dead. Two -- I don't know the names. A chief that we had pulled, that was alive, who was -- looked -- appeared to be disoriented, not -- at the time didn't seem like he was injured in any major way.

We removed him from World Trade Center No. 6, took him to the north end of that mezzanine, where someone had got the bucket of 12 truck into operation, and we put him in the bucket, and he was removed to the street. I recall the name Rappe. I'm not sure if it was him, though. Maybe it's just the chief that I saw there that day, but from the back of his coat that's one of the names I remember.

We then moved into World Trade Center No. 6 with the chief. I believe that Firefighter Long can recall what battalion we were with. We operated with him for about a half an hour, searching in there.

We then left that building on our own back down onto the West Street side, helping extricate and operate more hose lines and doing other searches of rigs for the time frame, I can't recall, and then made

Macchia

our way underneath that pedestrian bridge, the north bridge, underneath that north bridge after we had spent, I guess, between operating the line and searching that World Trade Center No. 6, has to have been almost two hours gone by now, listening, hearing the Ladder 6 Maydays throughout, went back down via the 12 truck basket down to the street underneath the foot bridge and tried to make our way up to where the rest of our members were operating in that separate stairwell.

And that's what we did the entire day.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thanks a lot, Frank, for all your help.

The time now is 10:58, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110297

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DEAN NELIGAN

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 11, 2001. The time is 12:07 p.m. I'm Chief Robert Burns, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER NELIGAN: Firefighter Dean Neligan, Engine 262.

Q. This is in regards to the events of September 11, 2001.

If you would, Dean, just tell us in your own words what happened that day.

A. Well, about at 8:45 that morning, the first plane hit the trade center, which came on the TV. We were all in the kitchen. We being located in Long Island City, we knew we'd be going over to Manhattan, whether to the trade center or relocation, so we more or less got ready to go.

I believe at 9:02 we got a ticket in, which sent us to the entrance to the Midtown Tunnel, so we proceeded to the Midtown Tunnel.

In the process of going to the Midtown Tunnel, the second plane hit, which we were not aware of. There was no communication on the rig of a second plane hitting the second tower.

We actually were at our staging area for what

Neligan

seemed to be 30 to 40 minutes waiting for them to close down the Midtown Tunnel and the Westside Highway, apparently set up a route for us to proceed through. We were probably about a dozen rigs, all from the Long Island City area.

As we started going through -- as we actually staged there, then we heard word that the Pentagon was hit, and there was a second plane that hit the second tower.

As we started through the tunnel, is apparently when the first tower came down, because we heard a chauffeur in his rig saying there's been a collapse. He was stuck in his rig. He didn't say it was the tower that came down. I assumed it was some sort of facade that came down, not realizing it was the whole tower.

We then proceeded to go through the tunnel, made our way to the Westside Highway, one rig after the other. We parked on the Westside Highway. We proceeded down the Westside Highway towards the towers, not knowing the first tower was down.

We made it to Vesey and West and more or less paused there looking for some sort of direction, because there was no command post. There was nobody

Neligan

more or less giving directions on where to go, what to do.

At that point, I looked up. I saw the second tower. I said to one of the brothers with me, that it's so smoky, you can't even see the first tower, not even knowing the first tower was down to the ground.

From our angle, the second tower was closest to us, so between the tower being behind that one and the smoke, I just assumed you couldn't see it from the smoke.

As we were staged at Vesey and West is when the second tower began to come down. At that point, I thought it was just the top of the building coming down, the antenna. Didn't make a move initially. Then everybody started making a move for safety. I proceeded to follow.

I was able to duck in behind an ESU unit, which was about 20 or 30 yards back down the Westside Highway, got behind that, was involved in the coverage and the darkness, which seemed about five to six, seven minutes, and then the area cleared.

There was a parking lot on the right of us that was about 20 cars on fire. We stretched a line off of 220's rig, which was parked right there and

Neligan

proceeded to operate trying to put out the car fires because of the tremendous amount of black smoke that was coming back towards us at the Westside Highway.

We operated there for about an hour, hour-and-a-half with whatever little water we could get and no tools.

At that point, we then proceeded back to our rig, which was back at the walkway further east behind us, and then more or less we just stayed there for many hours waiting for instructions.

Q. When you were there, when the second tower came down, did you see any rigs that you could identify or any people?

A. Not offhand. There were rigs parked one after the other along the Westside Highway, and where I ducked in was near this ESU unit, police vehicle, and then 220's rig happened to be there that we could stretch a line off.

First I found my officer. Then we proceeded to find two other members from our unit, which were a little further back, and then we started operating at the -- in the lot with the car fires.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Thanks, Dean. That concludes our interview. It's 2:12 p.m.

File No. 9110298

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM VAN NAME

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is December 11, 2001. The time is 11:57, and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the safety battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with William VanName, firefighter 1st, from Engine 35, and the interview is taking place in the quarters of Engine 35.

Q. William, please tell us the events of September 11 as you recall them.

A. On September 11, we were at educational day at Randall's Island. The entire company was out of service.

We were notified that a plane hit the World Trade Center, to stand by, and then the instructor came in and said another plane had hit the tower. We are on total recall. Go back to your company and man your rigs.

So we did. We got back to 35 engine's quarters. We were told to wait there for six engines to arrive. We were the staging area for six engines, some from the Bronx and some from north Manhattan. Five engines showed. We were waiting for 83 engine,

VanName

which didn't show up. They were on their way down West Street, halfway down at 50 something street. The dispatcher returned them to our quarters when they arrived here.

Then we all went in a convoy down West Street to the World Trade Center. Driving down West Street, we observed the towers, both on fire. Both were still standing. By the time we arrived down the end of West Street, around Chambers or so, one tower had collapsed. I believe it was --

Q. The south tower?

A. -- the south tower. We gave a 1084. We got up to -- we were on West Street between Vesey and Murray, where the rig was positioned. We took all our gear. Everybody that was on the rig -- there was five men on the rig and two on the back step at that time.

We manned all our gear. We went down. We started walking down West Street towards the World Trade Center. When we got to between Vesey and the pedestrian overpass, the north pedestrian overpass, we heard a fantastic rumble. Everybody looked up, and as we observed it, the second tower started to collapse.

The time frame of that, I'm not sure. It was probably between 10:10 and 10:30, somewhere around

VanName

there.

As we observed the tower falling, most people stood there and watched for a couple of seconds, and then as the cloud of smoke and the debris started coming at us, we all dropped our equipment and gear and we ran for shelter down West Street north on West Street.

We ended up in the high school on the west side. We stayed there for a few moments until we could get our company together and the lieutenant can make sure he had the roll call and everybody was present.

We started heading down towards World Trade Center again, and we had assisted and helped with EMS and helped the brothers -- police, firemen, civilians -- to the ambulances and take them out of the immediate area.

At that time we were separated. Our company was separated. I ended up staying with Firefighter Jim Powers. He was overcome by the smoke cloud and debris. He went down. He became light-headed, and he fainted. I got EMS to assist there. They treated him, and they felt he should go to the hospital.

I was with him at that time. We got on a bus. We went to St. Vincent's. He was admitted. We

VanName

stayed there for two hours under observation. He was released. We immediately came back to where our rig was positioned on West Street, and we found our company, and after that the lieutenant said we were on standby.

I was notified that our two chiefs from the 12th Battalion were missing, and -- could you stop it for a minute, please?

(Recess taken.)

A. Also while we were responding down West Street to the World Trade Center, we heard a Mayday given by, I believe, an engine company chauffeur that was trapped in the collapse inside the rig.

As we arrived at the staging area, we also saw the dust cloud and the debris that had already been from the first tower on the ground. That's it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: All right, thank you very much. That's fine.

File No. 9110300

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEVEN KLEE

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is December 10, 2001, and the time is 3:15 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Steven Klee, firefighter first from Ladder 22. We're in the quarters of Engine 76 to conduct this interview.

Q. Steve, please tell me what you remember from September 11th.

A. I remember responding. I was the chauffeur of 22. I got to the scene. I pulled in. I drove down Columbus Avenue down to 24th, then to West Side Highway. West Side Highway we took all the way down. I remember pulling in behind 25 Truck. Then I remember 2 Truck pulling in behind us.

We got off the rig, grabbed our equipment, gear, cylinders, whatever, and started walking towards the towers, initially walked past the command post and then walked back to the command post, stood at the command post I believe which was across from one for about maybe five minutes. Then the lieutenant said, "All right,

we're going in."

We walked down West Street on I guess it would be the -- that would be West; right? Yeah, west side of West Street down to I guess the south pedestrian bridge, walked underneath that across and shimmied our way -- or not shimmied. How would I describe that? Ran into the hotel.

In the hotel we were told we were going to get our orders from there. The lieutenant said take a blow, just relax, take our stuff off. We took our stuff off. Probably about maybe another five minutes after that, we got geared up and he said, "All right, we're going." I didn't ask the officer exactly where we were going. We just started walking.

We headed towards tower one or into the hotel into tower one, passed Deputy Chief Galvin on the way in. He was with somebody else. I don't really remember the chiefs. He just told us we were going to the 75th floor.

We got into tower one, made the turn into tower one started heading I guess either towards the elevators or the escalator. That's

when we heard a rumbling. I dove for a wall and it got pitch-black.

I just basically rode it out until after the sound and -- how would you describe that one? After the (inaudible) stopped. I don't know what the heck happened then, how best to describe it. I got up. I thought I was by myself, and I then just started calling out for the rest of the company.

I found the four other guys. We got out towards the entrance of one onto West Street. We couldn't find the lieutenant, so I told the four of them if they go outside I'll go back in and look for the lieutenant.

Four of the guys went out. I came back in to look for the lieutenant. I was searching for him. I was trying to get him on the radio. I couldn't get anybody on the radio. I kept going back and forth. I was grabbing civilians, bringing them to the front, going back in, looking around, bringing civilians back out.

I was bringing some civilians out, and that's when debris started falling and hitting the ground. I brought them back in, gave an

urgent, saying I need help in getting the civilians out, because I couldn't go out the hotel. There was no hotel entrance anymore. I couldn't go out through the food mall or whatever because that was completely caved in.

I was giving an urgent. Somebody answered me. I told them what it was, and then they didn't answer, they didn't come back. All of a sudden I went back to the main entrance and I saw a bunch of firemen. So I figured they came in to help me, but it wasn't that. They were coming from upstairs.

I asked did they see my lieutenant. They said no. That company I remember was actually 7 Engine, I believe. They were coming down. I think they were missing their control man at the time.

I searched for the lieutenant, looked under the debris and everything, couldn't find him. I said he must be out because I should have been able to see him.

That's when I got out. I believe I remember seeing Feehan. I believe he was by the entrance of one. I walked across the street to a

command post, which when I got there, there really was nobody there anymore.

I remember talking to a four-star chief, telling him what happened. All he kept telling me was we're going north, we're going north. I said, "I can't find my lieutenant. I'm 22 chauffeur." I said, "I can't find my lieutenant." He said, "We're going north. I'm sending everybody north." So I said all right.

That's when I left and I started walking up the street, trying to find the rendezvous or whatever what the heck would you call it? What do you call it?

Q. The staging area?

A. Staging area. I went up there. I spoke to a couple of chiefs up on West Side Highway and West Street. They said, yeah, guys are going to the water.

So I went back down to Vesey, tried to get to the water. I guess I got behind the American Express building. That's when one came down. After everything calmed down from that and I finally made it to the water, talked to the field comm., told him who I was missing. Our can

man showed up there. So then I only had to find four more guys.

I asked them have you seen the lieutenant? I went to West Street. I walked up. That's basically where I saw the rest of our guys there.

Q. Before the second tower came down, did you notice anything, a sign that it might be coming down or anything like that or did you hear anybody give any warning on the radios or anything like that?

A. No, I was just trying to find out -- no, there was no -- it was still dusty out there, and you really couldn't see. I didn't even realize that two came down. I thought another bomb or a plane hit the building. That's what I thought it was. When I got out, debris and paper was all over. Like I said, I didn't realize what happened until after one came down and I put together what happened when we were in one lobby.

Q. Okay. That's it.

A. I think so, yeah. Quick and easy.

Q. Thank you, Steve. I appreciate your cooperation.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 3:24
p.m., and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110301

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN McGOVERN

Interview Date: December 11, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 10:24 a.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the New York City department Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Kevin McGovern, firefighter first from Engine 53, in the quarters of Engine 53.

Q. Kevin, please tell us the events of September 11th as you remember them.

A. I was working my second day tour. We were in the kitchen, and we saw the first plane, watching TV. Of course the news came on that a plane had hit one of the towers of the World Trade Center. So we were watching TV, monitoring the radio.

Then there was another explosion in the other tower. That's when we got called down there. It was the second fifth alarm when the second plane hit, and we got sent down to the Trade Center. We were assigned to tower two, which was the south tower of the World Trade Center.

We got down there pretty fast. It must have taken only ten minutes to get there. Once we got to the West Side Highway, it was kind of

empty and we just flew right down there. We parked the rig on West Street approximately between Murray and Vesey.

Then we walked down to where the command post was set up, which was in front of an underground garage entrance in front of Two World Financial Center. So we reported in to the command post on West Street and kind of just waited there, awaiting our orders.

We were just standing there watching people jump out of the -- we were opposite the north tower, so we just kind of stood there. There was a lot of jumpers coming from the north tower on the West Street side.

I really don't know how long we were there, maybe ten minutes. To be honest with you, I couldn't even recall what other companies were around us, but there were several other companies with us, mostly engine companies.

With all the jumpers and stuff, I just put my head down and stopped watching the jumpers. I waited there, waiting to see what they were going to do with us.

A chief came over to my lieutenant,

Lieutenant Dorritie, and told us to move some rigs to make a lane for ambulances coming south on West Street. He wanted us to go back north on West Street, back towards where we had our rigs, and just ensure that there was a lane for ambulances to get down West Street.

So he said leave all our equipment there at the command post, which we did. We left our hoses, took our masks off, and walked north on West Street. We only had needed to move I think two rigs, because they were blocking the lane. It really didn't take long. It took maybe 15 minutes to take care of that. We made the lane for the ambulances, and then we headed back towards the command post.

We were walking south on West Street back to the command post. Like I said, I had my head down again. All of a sudden I heard like a tremendous thunder. I looked up, and all of a sudden people were just running towards me. I looked up and, sure enough, the south tower was collapsing. It was like a big, huge wave coming at us.

At this point we were right before the

command post. I was only a few yards in front of the command post, but there was a fence between the area for the Winter Garden atrium and where the command post was. Lieutenant Dorritie was in front of me and two firefighters, Firefighter Cachia and Firefighter Giaconelli, were in front of me. Two other firefighters from my company were behind me, Firefighter Catalano and Firefighter Schofield. They were two new guys on rotation in the firehouse.

When I saw the thing collapse and people running towards me, I just turned and looked for the quickest place to get cover. Initially I thought of ducking under the pedestrian bridge that goes over West Street on the north side, but I decided that wasn't going to be safe.

So I just ran right into the Winter Garden atrium. A lot of people were running in that way. So I kind of just ran in there. I ran inside and realized it was an atrium, so I had to get out of there in case some debris had come through the atrium.

So we went through the atrium and made

a right, once we got inside which there was -- so now we're heading north within this building. There was an exit that led out to Vesey Street. This is where I ran into Firefighter Catalano, who is one of the guys that was walking behind me, and I was asking him did he see Firefighter Schofield. He said no. I was worried about Schofield.

We came out onto Vesey Street, and we were walking around Vesey Street. A bunch of other firemen, a bunch of civilians had gone the same route, through the Winter Garden and made a right and north onto Vesey Street.

So there were a bunch of ambulances lined up on Vesey Street, and me and Mike were walking west of Vesey, away from the cloud on West Street, and we noticed Schofield in one of the ambulances.

We found out how he was doing. He was hyperventilating. He was taking oxygen inside the ambulance. We stayed with him for a while, made sure he was all right. He said he was feeling better after he took some oxygen. He said he was going to come with us. So he got out

of the ambulance and walked with us west on Vesey.

We came out onto North End Avenue.

Here I ran into another fireman that was covered in soot, and we stayed with him. He was choking on I guess the dust and stuff. He almost sounded like a cat with a hairball. He was just trying to get the stuff out, clear his own throat. I stayed with him and was encouraging him to cough. He was able to get some air, he was saying, but he was trying to get this stuff out of his throat.

We stayed with him, and we led him to an ambulance on North End Avenue. I told him to try and get some oxygen. We kind of left him with an ambulance on North End Avenue.

There was another ambulance there.

There was an EMT inside the ambulance, and she was really kind of freaking out. She was very emotional. We stayed with her, calmed her down, made sure she got some oxygen.

There was a big cloud on West Street, so we decided to go north on North End Avenue and go up a block and around. We were going to walk

back down West Street, approach it from the north. So we went up North End Avenue and made a right on Murray street.

I was with the two rotation guys, Mike Catalano and Dan Schofield. They were pretty shook up. Dan was still kind of breathing heavy and hyperventilating a little bit. He said he needed to call his wife. He called his wife. We ended up near Stuyvesant High School. I think that's on Murray Street. So he made a call.

I said, "Okay, I'm going to go back down." They were kind of hesitant, so I said, "Look, you guys stay up here at Stuyvesant High School. I'm going to head back down."

I started walking south on West Street again. I probably got just before Vesey Street when the north tower collapsed. Again, I just turned around and looked to see a place where I could get some cover. There was a big open lot between Murray and Vesey, so that was all wide open.

So I ran north back up towards Stuyvesant High School. Basically I got to the high school just as the cloud hit. I went inside

the high school. I was in there only about a minute, kind of let the cloud pass, gave it about a minute.

I didn't run into the two firemen, Catalano and Schofield, again. I assumed they were safe inside the high school, Stuyvesant High School, because that's where I had left them, right outside. I just assumed they got some cover inside, which they did, I found out later.

So I stayed in the high school about a minute, let the cloud pass, the initial cloud. I left the high school. I went back onto West Street, started walking south again. There was a big cloud out there. Everything was covered in dust. I just headed south on West Street again through all this debris, past all the rigs. I just made my way south again back towards the site, back towards the Trade Center.

There wasn't really a lot of people around. It was kind of eerie. It was almost like a ghost town with the cloud and everything. I guess I got to Vesey Street and I ran into some other guys. I ran into a guy from 43 Truck. He said that he had seen my lieutenant on Vesey,

towards the water, towards North End Avenue.

So I walked up there. I wanted to let my officer know. We had tried earlier to get through on the radio to notify my officer that we were all together, me and the two other guys, and that we were safe up on North End Avenue, but we couldn't get through.

Like I said, one of the guys from 43 Truck said my officer was out on Vesey Street. Somebody had to move that rig, which was actually a pretty good move. From where the rig was on West Street, somebody had taken it down Vesey all the way down to the water.

Q. That was your rig?

A. Yeah, our rig.

By the time I got down there, I looked for my officer, who I ended up running into, to let him know we were all safe. I let him know the two other guys were up by Stuyvesant High School, they were okay. So we regrouped by where our rig was, by the water on Vesey Street.

I think it was the marine unit, Firefighter, that had pulled up to a pier there and stretched a line to feed our rig with water.

So we regrouped there.

I think at that point -- a lot of this is murky. Sometimes I think I don't know what came first. I think at that point we went up North End Avenue. We went up to Stuyvesant High School to hook up with the two other guys. That's basically where a staging area was starting to form up there, on West Street.

So myself, the lieutenant, the two other guys that the lieutenant was with, I had found out that they had ran through the garage where the command post was. Since we were walking behind them, our quickest route was to run through the Winter Garden. So we got separated that way.

Like I said, there was this fence there between the Winter Garden and where the garage was. They were south of the fence, so they ran through the garage. We were north of the fence, so our best route was through the Winter Garden. That's how we got separated.

As I said, I regrouped with the lieutenant and the two guys that ran through the garage on Vesey near where our rig was. We

walked up to Stuyvesant, hooked up with the other guys, stayed at the staging area for a while.

Basically we just worked our way south again on West Street. I think we went back to the rig once and then we walked over to the site and started a search at that point.

We were searching around the debris field that ended up on West Street opposite the north tower. We were searching around in there. At that time Seven World Trade Center was burning and was in danger of collapsing. After a while the lieutenant said, "Let's move, let's get out of here, let's take a break."

Actually I think at that point just as we were leaving, guys -- I don't know who it was. I guess it was a chief was saying clear the area, because they were worried about number Seven World Trade Center coming down and burying guys who were digging.

So we basically went back to the rig, because they were clearing that area out. It took about three hours for Seven World Trade Center to actually come down. So we were off to the side.

There was a whole bunch of firemen on Vesey Street, and that's where we were, on Vesey, just waiting to go back in and start searching again. But that didn't come for a few hours. It didn't come until after Seven World Trade Center had come down.

Then we went back, did a little more searching, and then we ended up taking up. I think we took up around 9, 9:30 at night and caught a ride back to the firehouse.

Q. Did you hear any maydays before the collapse or right after the collapse, either collapse?

A. Not really. I didn't have a radio. Like I said, everything was kind of foggy. It was kind of a weird scene. So there may have been maydays. Probably not having a radio I didn't take notice of them. I didn't hear any radio traffic at all, basically.

Q. Is there anything else?

A. No, that's it.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 10:42, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110302

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD BOERI

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 2:05 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Richard Boeri of Engine 44.

Q. Richard, just explain in your own words what happened on September 11th.

A. I was minimum manning that day, overtime. At 9:08 the call came in. I was control man. We ended up going out of quarters, going down Second Avenue down to about 59th Street, across the West Side Highway and down.

I believe we parked the rig approximately, I think it was Murray Street or Barclay and West, and we proceeded to go down to the command post, which was I believe across from One World Trade Center or the north tower.

I think we were there for about five minutes. They said, "Put your gear down. You're going to walk up about 80 flights of stairs," because the elevators were out. So we put our masks down, rollups and everything.

I think we saw like 18 people jump.

Then one of the officers there said, "Turn around, concentrate on who you can save. You can't save those people anymore." I don't recall who that was.

There was a chaplain behind us. It wasn't Father Judge, but one of the guys knew him. He said a little prayer for us.

So I went through the guys from there. I saw the chief's aide, and I talked to him for a little bit. It had to be about 20 minutes later when they sent us down to approximately Cedar Street and West Street. They were there, two or three rigs blocking the West Side Highway coming from the south. So we were sent with 53 Engine to move those rigs out of the way.

Myself, my whole company, Matt Shannon, Bobby Reeg, the covering officer, and Eddie Kennedy proceeded to walk down. Looking over, I saw 65 Engine hooked up to the hotel, I believe, or the south tower. I don't remember which one because there's a high pressure pump.

The officer saw there were several small fires at the foot of the pedestrian bridge right there at Liberty and West. So our initial

thing was myself and Eddie Kennedy would move the rig away from West Street to let the companies come up from the south. Also they told us to bring ambulances up Washington Street, which is on the south side of the south tower there.

Bobby Reeg, the nozzle man, he was checking rigs up the West Side Highway for an extinguisher for the car fire along with Matt Shannon. So they were looking I guess -- right in front of the Vista Hotel.

We had our backs to the tower and under that pedestrian bridge walking south, myself, Eddie Kennedy and the officer, when you heard the crackling. You looked up and you saw the one floor explode on itself and the top start to slide.

At that point Eddie just told me to run, and we just dropped everything and ran south towards Albany Street. Now, we ran I guess on the east side of West Side Highway -- we ran across to -- the east side, we ran to the west side of that highway, down towards Albany.

At the southwest corner there were a few parked cars. I saw Eddie Kennedy lose his

helmet and dive under a car. I saw a building -- I believe it's at the corner of West and Albany -- and I was going to try to go for the building.

Once all the debris and everything caught up, I was pushed over a four foot fence. The next thing, I woke up, I was spitting everything out of my mouth, and it was just black, silent.

When I came to, I heard a civilian yelling on my left. So I found my helmet next to me, picked myself up. I found the civilian, who was over by the building. Make it Park Place, I guess? I can't tell what building that is. Anyway, it's right on Albany and West Street.

So I walked the civilian back. I walked back to where my company was. Where I last knew, Albany and West, where I found the officer and Eddie Kennedy. I passed the civilian off to someone else who was there.

I was with Eddie Kennedy and the officer when Dr. Kelly showed up, her and another guy I believe from 4 Truck, I want to say. I'm not sure. I had cut my head. My whole face was

full of blood. I was talking to them. I was okay.

We were trying to radio Matt Shannon, who was our backup man. He had the radio. He said he knew where Bobby Reeg was, because Matt was just going for the river up by the marina there.

Dr. Kelly said, "Come with me. We'll wash you up. You're hurt." So I told the officer I'm going with him, which we proceeded to go to Albany Street, I guess, half a block to a parking garage, which is in the Hudson View West, in the Hudson Tower here.

In there they had a guy on the back board, Kevin Shea, who I guess he was hurt before the collapse because there was something -- they had him on a back board and everything.

I was there when they went to try to find a gurney or stretcher to get him to an ambulance, because they told us the whole southern section you couldn't get to an ambulance or anything.

I was there for a while with him, when you heard the rumbling again. That's when the

north tower came down. We stayed in the garage. There was another chief there. He covered Kevin Shea when all the dust came into the whole garage, all the debris and everything, all the dust didn't get into his spot because he was all strapped down. He had a dislocated hip or something. He kept repeating the same questions about 15 times over and over.

We knew we had to get him out. We got to 4 Truck on I guess it was West End Avenue over here one block west of West Side Highway. They got an ambulance, which we threw him in the ambulance and we drove straight toward West Street.

(Interruption.)

A. So we got the ambulance, and we drove straight west on Albany Street all the way to the river. We broke through the chain fence on the esplanade there where the police boat pulled up. At that point is where we proceeded to hand Kevin over on the back board over the side railing and into a police boat.

A few minutes later I ended up going on a police boat also across to Jersey to Hoboken,

where I was there until about 11:00 at night because they wouldn't let us back. While we were there, we made phone calls back and found out where everybody was from our point of view.

In general that's it.

Q. Thank you very much, Rich.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 2:12, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110308

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER GEORGE KOZLOWSKI

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

G. KOZLOWSKI

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: The time is 1620 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with GEORGE KOZLOWSKI of Ladder 20. He is assigned to Ladder 20 of the New York City Fire Department. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 20 in the office's quarters regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman KOZLOWSKI, tell me what happened on September 11.

A. We just got relieved after 0900, Fireman Escofrery and myself. We saw the plane coming over, sort of over quarters and then the initial crash. We heard the initial crash. 20 truck and squad 18 took off right away and Kenny and I, we were just standing there and Timmy Haskell with squad was there also and he was going down there, so they grabbed -- can I say the bread truck, their other rig.

Kenny and I got redressed and Timmy Haskell, same thing and we took off in their hazmat spare rig, the hazmat rig. Approaching there we could see the tower, where the plane hit. We pulled up alongside squad 18's rig and just before 20's rig, at that point

G. KOZLOWSKI

we were looking up and we saw the people jumping already. We thought it was parts of the building coming down, but it was jumpers. We must have seen, while we were standing outside at that point -- because we were looking on our rig for any tool that we could find. We didn't have radios. I think Timmy Haskell had a radio, but I will get back to that.

So we got a couple of tools, I think two axes and a halogen, but no -- there was no radio around. As we went inside on the West Street side of the north tower into the lobby, I can't remember the companies really. There was a bunch of companies standing fast. I just can't picture it right now. We were right by the command post. I did see Ganci, Chief Hayden, Feehan, Von Essen, who else, the aide, who was it, Kevin Wa, I think it was Kevin Wa, the aide.

We first initially, we wanted to tell somebody that we were there, so they knew we were there. We tried to get Chief Hayden because he knew us. We knew us while he was at Division 1 anyway. I think Kenny got -- did tell him.

At that point we were just standing fast. We didn't want to go roam off far away because we didn't have a radio. At that point we heard more jumpers

G. KOZLOWSKI

hitting the outside awning. We thought it was stuff, but man, the sound of those bodies crashing down was unbelievable. I mean a giant thump. We did see bodies that got pulled out of the elevators because all the elevators fell. Then Kenny and I just thought well, let's just walk in the main lobby there and maybe try and pry open and see if anybody is left in the elevator itself.

We did a quick walk around in that section, but there were only a couple that were closed. We could wedge it open a little and take a look. There were no other bodies. There was about three or four bodies that were pulled from the elevator and they were covered up already.

We went back closer to the command post and at that point there were more jumpers and there were body parts flying into the lobby. At that point, they started to move the command post, because all that shit was just flying in, I mean, you know, chunks.

Kenny and I -- I forgot who asked us -- it was one of the officers. At that point there were a lot of people coming down from the lobby, the loge area, and they were asking us to tell the people to keep moving, move, move. So he goes why don't you take

G. KOZLOWSKI

a walk up to the third floor, the third floor through the B stairwell. He goes people are -- you know how narrow those stairwells are. As big as that building is.

There was a lot of water coming down from the stairs. Lot of people were panicking, so we kept pushing them out, pushed them to that second floor lobby and then it was getting pretty bad out there, because I couldn't tell you what side, I guess the jet fuel and everything that was flying down was really kicking up on the outside. We let them know too, and we were afraid, because those big plate windows, we wanted to get the people away from there in case it blew and that's eventually what happened. Thank god Kenny and I, we closed off that door so nobody could go down there any more.

At that point, we were -- I can't remember how long we were on that third floor pushing the people through. That's when we felt a big giant tremble, like a mini earthquake. That was the south tower collapsing. We didn't see it but we really felt it. All the lights shut down, the emergency lights on the stairwell and everything. People were starting to really panic.

G. KOZLOWSKI

Then there was another small explosion on that second floor. I guess it was that plate windows, everything going. That's when we encountered 5 Engine. They were coming down from the fourth floor or whatever. I didn't see their officer. I might have, but it was dark at that point too, and then -- let's see -- there were a couple of other probies there. I think they were probies, because you know, you look, but it was mostly 5 Engine there working on -- to find another -- not a stairwell, an exit to go out.

Luckily a person was coming down. I don't know from what floor but on the third floor encountered us. He says no, I know another exit down this way. Well. That was the only other door that we could get out. It was lucky, because a lot of the other people -- because it was pitch black now. So Kenny -- well we all lined up. It was not like a long walk, but a good enough walk to get to the other exit. It was good that guy found it, because I think we would have got stuck. That he knew about it, because I don't think we would have found it.

Okay, so then we made a line and we pushed the people not to go through that third floor door and we just told the people which way to go. Then we had

G. KOZLOWSKI

flashlights. Other people had flashlights so everyone made it and we kept pushing people through, go, go, move, move. There was one guy, we thought he was having a heart attack. We got him up and we put him on a chair. He was pretty heavy set. So I think it was one of the guys from 5 Engine that said keep going. I will stay here with him and try to get him out.

So we just kept going, moved more through, went downstairs, got through -- it wasn't the main lobby where the command post was. We made it through that way. Got downstairs, and there was like a -- it was like a giant courtyard or something and somebody out there was a black Battalion Chief. I forgot his name. Another guy that says no, no, keep going through here. I don't even know what building it was that was adjacent to the Trade Center right there. It was closer to the West Street side.

At that point, there were more jumpers in that courtyard and more -- there was quite a bit more debris from the building, falling from the upper floors. So we set up like a -- one guy stayed where the people were coming through and another guy ran over to the -- where that other building was or something.

Couple of us would look to see if anything is

G. KOZLOWSKI

falling and then tell the people run, run, run and then wait to see if anything else fell. Luckily not too many things fell. It was good hooking up like that to make sure.

At that point, all the people that were with us or whatever, there were quite a few. That was it. So at that point, I think the Chief says hang out here in case some other people come back. I know there was a proby with us, Escofrery, and another guy. The Chief took off. We heard like a lot of trembling and everything. So we better get out of here. This doesn't look good. There is no more people coming.

So we started walking the same way the Chief went, and he was at the other end. He said the same thing. He said we better get our asses out of here. This doesn't look good at all. As we were walking, we heard -- we thought it was another plane coming. It was like a big shhhhh. A thousand times louder than that. It sounded like a missile coming and we just started booking. We took off like bats out of hell.

We made it around the corner and that's when the shit hit the fan right then and there. We heard that loud and then ba boom. I just -- it was like an earthquake or whatever. A giant, giant explosion.

G. KOZLOWSKI

Kenny made it and those other guys made it around this bend here. I was like the last guy and I just turned around and I just sort of ffffffff, I just did a fetal position. I crawled down and held -- thank god -- that helmet saved my life: I just held onto it and the impact, I closed my eyes -- just the impact, I could just feel shit hitting me, flying.

I think something fell on my back that protected me from some of the other stuff that fell. Luckily a couple of things hit my helmet. Then it was just that impact and I was in a fetal position, just holding my helmet, shaking. Then this big gust came and I just went flying, maybe 30, 40 feet. Tumbling.

I got up, got on my hands and knees because all of the white shit was all over me. I just kept crawling. My ears were like deaf, you know, when you hear a giant firecracker or something. I went crawling, spitting that shit out, and I couldn't see anything because everything was white. I just kept crawling. I tried to yell out Kenny, Kenny Escofrery, but everything was so muffled. I didn't know what else was going to happen. I just tried to fucking get out of there.

Then I saw flashing lights. I said oh, man,

G. KOZLOWSKI

at least there is something there. At this point I didn't even know -- I thought it was like a part of the building collapsing. I got up to the car and it was like a Suburban and the lights were still on and it was running. I got in there, opened the door, there was nobody in there. At first I was just going to get in the Suburban and wait it off or something, wait until it cleared off. I said I'm getting my ass out of here. I don't know what's going to happen.

So I kept crawling and I saw another flashing light and I was yelling out Kenny, Kenny, hey, anybody out there, help. That's when I heard Kenny. He already was walking back to see where I was. We met up. He goes let's go, let's go. Because we were dying of thirst now too from swallowing that shit.

Then it started clearing up a little. We were on the West Street side. That was it. We just kept walking and just walking, trying to find some water. We saw some other trucks there. I forgot what companies. They weren't affected with it, but it was mostly everything was covered white.

We made it to the street. There was a cop there with an open hydrant, washing everybody down. She was very nice. She said kneel down, because we

G. KOZLOWSKI

were covered in shit. We made it. We were on West Street. Got some water. We were just sitting there wanting to catch our breath. We were looking at this shit and saying, "oh, my god," I wonder where's our guys?

Took a little rest there and we started walking back to ask people if they saw 20 or 55 or squad. That's initially A truck or something. A truck made it out, because they know our guys. That's why. At this point we saw -- oh, god -- we didn't catch up with anybody that saw 20.

We waited there. We said let's hold off. Maybe some other companies will come out and we will ask them. Maybe -- like the first, second, third due companies that would know anybody if they did see 20, because initially they probably all showed up together. They might have been on the same floor or they passed them on the stairwell.

Hung out there for quite sometime. Just hoping somebody saw them or -- so at this point Kenny and I said we can't -- let's walk back to A truck. Maybe they know something. We got back to A truck and -- were they back already? There were a bunch of guys there already that got called for a recall. There were

G. KOZLOWSKI

some officers that retired that came down to help out.

Lieutenant Woods, remember Woodsy? He was there. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

Then a couple of the guys from A truck came back and they didn't -- they said they did see them on the stairwell. After that they lost them, before, because they were making their way down from the 30th floor or something. They saw 20 on the 35th floor or something. 28th floor or something. They weren't sure. I'm trying to --

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay.

Q. I have a couple of maybe clarifying points. Nothing -- when you said you responded with the red truck and you parked near squad 18 and Ladder 20, do you know where that location was?

A. The Vesey Street. Do you know where that --

Q. Where the north walkway was?

A. Yes.

Q. That aide you said was Wah, Chris Wah, the Division 1 aide?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. When you said you met 5 Engine, originally you said you went to the B staircase, was that there

G. KOZLOWSKI

where 5 was, the B staircase?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. When you were escorting people out of the stairway from the third floor to the second floor that was also the B staircase?

A. Uh-huh. It might have been -- no, that was the B. That was the B.

Q. No Fire Department personnel came out, all civilians, other than 5 Engine?

A. What I saw. Yes. Because they were behind us. We had to keep walking in front and these guys would stay by the door.

Q. No other Fire Department units passed you?

A. No.

Q. That you know of?

A. Yes. Because there were a lot of probies there, so I didn't know what companies.

Q. When this guy directed you to the other exit down the hallway, that exit wasn't marked or anything, was it, like C exit?

A. It was pitch dark.

Q. It was basically a mezzanine type exit, a little wider staircase maybe?

A. No, I wouldn't say it was wider.

G. KOZLOWSKI

Q. The two of you and basically 5 Engine?

A. Right.

Q. When you finally did get out, you headed towards West Street?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. That same corner that you turned was with the walkway?

A. No, no, that wasn't a walkway.

Q. When you left --

A. Okay, we went to the north walkway, so we were going opposite, we were opposite of that walkway. We were away from that walkway.

Q. You headed back maybe towards Church Street?

A. Yes, maybe, probably, yes.

Q. When you came out, maybe you were on Vesey and made your way up to Church?

A. I don't think it was Vesey, because it was all big like courtyards that we made our -- there was a loading dock that we went down.

Q. Could it have been Barclay maybe?

A. I don't know, maybe. We were going opposite.

Q. You were east of where you were before?

A. Right. We weren't close to that -- the walkway. We went way around.

G. KOZLOWSKI

Q. When you walked back towards West Street, did you happen to see any apparatus maybe destroyed?

A. No, not at this point. They were all by the walkway.

Q. The only ones that you can remember are 18 and 20?

A. When we pulled up?

Q. Right.

A. Yes, 55.

Q. You saw 55 Engine?

A. I think so, because they were usually right there too.

Q. They would have been parked in front?

A. Yes. They would have been on West too. You know, when we do respond there, that's where we always park, right there.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: If you have nothing else that concludes the interview. Thank you.

File No. 9110309

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ANTHONY SALERNO

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: The date is December 10, 2001. The time is eleven o'clock in the morning.

This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Anthony Salerno, fireman 1st grade, of Engine Company 24 of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine 24 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman Salerno, could you please tell me what happened to you on September 11?

A. On September 11, I was on my way into the city. Being on vacation, I had just come back from a road trip. I was going to come in in the morning and bullshit with the guys.

I had not known at the point when I woke up that the buildings were attacked. On my way in, I noticed the trade center on fire, turned on 1010, and listened to the thing on my way in.

On my way in, the recall, the active recall, was engaged. I had gotten to the firehouse probably around ten after nine, was on the phone with Mike

A. SALERNO

Paolone. He was the -- he was working in Queens. He had told me to look across, look at the television. I saw the first building come down.

At that point, I noticed a bunch of guys coming into the firehouse -- Captain Varriale coming in, Billy McCarthy, Frankie McCutchen, Chris McArdle. We all had come in, and we were all ready to go down to the trade center, knowing that both companies and the battalion were down there.

We left the firehouse probably around a quarter after nine with two volunteers. One, a volunteer fireman, his first name was Tony. The second guy was a construction worker whose brother had been working at the trade center on the 110th Floor, I believe.

We got down to -- we got down as far as West Broadway and Chambers Street. At West Broadway and Chambers, we drove down with Captain Varriale in his pickup. We took some tools that we had grabbed out of the firehouse and some EMS supplies.

We got down to West Broadway and Chambers. We parked the rig. We walked down as far as West Broadway, and I would say Barclay and came back up, noticing that there was nothing but three blocks of

A. SALERNO

fire from Barclay down to Vesey, which would bring you to the north tower of the trade center.

We found car fires. We found buses on fire, but we happened to find a volunteer rig from the Bronx that was still in there. It was a old LaFrance. I got in the rig, backed the rig out with everybody helping, parked the rig on West Broadway, and found the rig on West Broadway between Barclay and Park, and backed the rig out and hooked up to a hydrant on West Broadway and Warren, and ended up supplying whatever lines we can get off the rig with -- using whatever fittings we could use off their rig, and I remember the water pressure being very low.

We ended up putting out as many fires as we could from West Broadway and Warren all the way down to West Broadway and Vesey.

Putting out all those fires, in that interim, the second building had come down. I remember hearing a lot of explosions, the street turning completely gray, gray clouds of smoke all over the place. Everybody had stopped what they were doing and ran back up the block.

We ran up West Broadway past Chambers, regrouped when the dust settled, and there was a

A. SALERNO

command post that was established at the time. I remember seeing Chief Daly and another chief -- I don't remember his name -- coming down to West Broadway and Barclay and setting up a command post.

I remember finding Engine Company 6's rig, stripping that rig of fittings and hose to hook up to anybody else. I remember at that time also they were worried about Building 7 because when the second tower came down, they were worried about parts of -- actually, when the first tower came down, they were worried about parts of Building 7 collapsing, so I remember getting into Building 7 and searching.

I got separated from the crew that I had gone down with, because I stayed at the pump panel. They had gone around the West Street side of the building and into the rubble.

I hooked up with a Lieutenant Ryan from 15 engine and Richie Cipoletti from Engine Company 55. We hooked up with as many people as we could.

We went to the command post, the true command post, which was set up at that day on Broadway and Chambers. We ended up getting assigned to a Staten Island firehouse engine company. We manned a hose line across the street from Tower 1 or what was remaining of

A. SALERNO

it, and I remember that building taking off in fire, so there was really nothing we could do with our one hand line.

I remember coming out of the building now because they were afraid of Building 7 coming down, and all the other buildings around it getting knocked down. So they took us out of the building.

I remember Building 7 coming down, again, with dust clouds, getting separated momentarily. I remember Staten Island companies all over the place. I remember a Brooklyn company coming, a Brooklyn engine company coming in, when I was still hooked up on West Broadway and Warren.

I don't remember the company's name, but it definitely was a Brooklyn company. I used their rig for parts also, and after the second building had come down, they had left their rig and was part of the command post on West Broadway and Barclay.

After that I stayed with the Staten Island company for quite awhile. We ended up working with some Brooklyn truck companies, and some Staten Island engine companies, a Brooklyn chief, just going through the various buildings after the building had gone down to see if anybody was still in there or if we could do

A. SALERNO

anything, putting out various little fires that were about from the rubble, and got back to my firehouse probably around 11:30, 12 o'clock, September 11 night, back to the quarters of Engine Company 24 and Ladder 5.

And that's what I did that day.

Q. Good. And you couldn't remember any of the numbers of the Brooklyn companies, right?

A. No, I couldn't remember the Brooklyn companies.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Thank for you the interview, and that's it.

File No. 9110310

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CHARLES GAFFNEY

Interview Date: December 10, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: The date is December 10, 2001. The time is 10:30 in the morning, and this is Battalion Chief Ronald H. Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I am conducting an interview with the following: Firefighter CHARLES GAFFNEY, fireman 1st grade, assigned to Engine 24, Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine 24 in the engine office regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman Gaffney, could you please tell me in your own words what happened on September 11 and your experience?

A. I just got relieved by a probie, one of the seven-week probies in Ladder 5, about 8:30. Sitting in the kitchen, tones went off. It was for the trade center. A plane hit the trade center.

I thought it was an accident, and I turned on New York 1, and I could see the hole in the building. Myself, couple of other guys that just got off crossed the street. We looked down the block, saw the trade center and we said, "Oh, we better get down there." Myself, Lieutenant Giammona, Jimmy Miller, Jimmy

C. GAFFNEY

Esposito got dressed, and we started down there.

On our way, Chief Prunty came by. He got dressed and came down with us. We walked down to Varrick Street. An off-duty firefighter pulled over with a pickup truck. We got in the back. We headed down there.

On our way down there, he told us that a second plane -- he heard on the radio that a second plane had just hit the other tower. So we were all discussing -- not panicking but discussing, you know, what's going on here. It kind of dawned on us that it was a terrorist attack at that point.

He drove us down there and dropped us off on Vesey Street right by Tower 7, and we proceeded into Tower 1 around the corner. We saw Engine 24 parked on the corner. We stowed our shoes that we were carrying with us at Engine 24.

We went into the Tower 1 lobby, and I noticed the command post was already set up, saw Commissioner Von Essen there in the lobby, and Battalion Chief McGovern. We went to Battalion Chief McGovern. Lieutenant Giammona told him, "Make us a unit. Put us to work. We're here." He said, "Okay."

Lieutenant Giammona got a radio from

C. GAFFNEY

somewhere, and they made us Ladder 5-B, and we met 9 truck on their way up the stairs. We met 9 truck on the way up the stairs, and there was another engine company. I don't remember what engine company it was, but I grabbed -- they were all carrying extra bottles, and since we had no masks or no equipment, we grabbed their extra gear and helped them. Me and Jimmy, Jimmy Esposito, grabbed roll-ups and a bottle and carried it upstairs for these guys, because they were overburdened.

We walked up. We got up to about the 10th Floor, and there was a chief on the floor who told us -- I don't know what chief it was. I don't know who he was. He said guys are already working their way down. He wanted us to start working our way up searching floors, going in on each floor, walking around the perimeter of the building, looking to see if anybody was on the floors, panicking, or trapped or whatever. So me and Esposito started doing that.

Vinnie Giammona, he flew up the stairs in front of us. Lieutenant Giammona, I should say. He had a radio. He went up the stairs. We lost track of him as we were searching the lower floors.

We made our way up to about the 21st Floor.

C. GAFFNEY

We met up with Engine 65 somewhere along the line there, and we were kind of listening to the officer of Engine 65's radio. We heard like a continuous roar, like a thunder, and the building shook.

All in between there was all foggy. I don't remember what happened in between there. Like, all I remember was once the building started shaking, I forgot everything else that was going on. It was like you were being thrown around on the floor.

We made our way into the stairway, and there were a few guys from Engine 65 in that stairway. There were no civilians in the stairs at that time. Most of them had -- must have gotten out by then from below the crash, but I remember hearing a radio transmission, "Urgent!" I don't know who gave it, but I remember hearing an "Urgent!" that all inside operations were off. Everybody out of the building, and we all started running down the stairs.

I remember seeing Faust, Battalion 28, on the 10th Floor in a doorway, and he was directing guys down. He must have been waiting for Chief McGovern, who had gone up ahead of us. I think he was on the 24th Floor. I left out -- I thought I heard -- I heard a radio transmission, and I thought it was Lieutenant

C. GAFFNEY

Giammona, that he was on the 44th Floor, something about an elevator. I'm not sure if there were people in the elevator or he found an elevator that was working, but he was trying to get through a message. It was his voice. It was unmistakable, that he had an elevator on the 44th Floor.

I do remember seeing Chief McGovern when we were on 20 or so go past me on his way up, and on the way down I saw his aide, Faust, and I said to Faust, "Come on, get out of here. They are ordering us out. Let's get out." He said he was waiting for the chief, and then when we got down, when we finally got down to the bottom, the lobby was a mess. It wasn't like a clear run out of the building.

I went out the same way I came in, so I knew where I was going. There was a pile of crap in the lobby, marble, Sheetrock, all that stuff. It was smoky, hazy, and when I got out in the street, it was a cloud. I had no idea what time it was, how long I was in there.

I remember running north at first under a scaffolding that was up and looking to my left, which was west, and I could see, so I ran west, and as I was running west, there were a bunch of firefighters in the

C. GAFFNEY

street. I remember guys screaming, "It's coming down," so I was, like, running for my life.

When I got -- I ran as far as the water, and then I started running north when I got to the water, a little park. That was Vesey Street, I guess, I took to the water. I started running north, and that pier, whatever that one -- whatever you want to call that ended, so you had to run back east to get further north.

By that time, the second building had already come down. I was shedding gear as I was running, so I went back for my gear, so that I could go back and look for people, because I wasn't sure where the guys I had gone down with were. We all disbursed, so I was looking for Jimmy Miller, and Jimmy Esposito and Vinnie Giammona. I don't know when I met up with them again, but I think it was on West Street, maybe a couple of blocks north of Vesey.

I remember running into John Ottrando, who was the engine chauffeur, when I ran out of the building. When I started running west, I remember seeing him, and he was covered in white, and I told him to run. I don't know which way he ran. I think he ran north as I was running west, and then little by little,

C. GAFFNEY

you know, started running into people, and that was really all, and then we started going back looking for people.

Q. I have a few questions, if you are finished.

A. Yeah. There are things I don't remember, like parts I'm sure I'm forgetting, but I think about things sometimes when I'm home or alone or something and something will pop in my head, and I said, wow, I forgot that even happened.

Q. Great. I mean not great that you remember stuff like that, but you did a pretty good job here.

You were with those three guys, Lieutenant Giammona, Miller and Esposito --

A. Right.

Q. -- originally?

A. When I got on -- I left this out. When we got in the back of this guy's pickup truck, Chief Prunty was with us on Varrick Street.

Q. Right.

A. Another SUV of some type pulled up, and he said -- he must have been an off-duty firefighter, too, because he said to Chief Prunty, "Chief, get in with us." One of the guys got out and went in the back and let the chief in the front seat. They followed the

C. GAFFNEY

truck we were in, the pickup truck we were in. They followed us, and the chief got out, and he came in the lobby with us.

Then Chief Prunty I never saw again that day. I don't know when he went to the command. I saw him go to the command post. I don't know where he was assigned to go, you know, what he was doing.

Nine truck we were with on the way up the stairs, and we were carrying their bottles and their roll-ups, whoever's roll-ups they had. They had roll-ups with them. It must have been an engine with them. I'm not sure if it was 33.

I remember seeing the guys from 65 out in the street after we got out, like, whoever the officer was on 65 that day. It was his radio we were listening to to get out of the building. I remember seeing them in the street later, and we were all glad to see one another that we got out.

Like I said, when everyone started running down the stairs, firemen -- it was all firemen. Nobody knew where -- everybody ran in separate directions, and there was an ironworker in the lobby -- I remember that -- directing people out of the building, telling them not to walk, to run, because there was stuff

C. GAFFNEY

falling.

I'd say there's a lot -- there are so many things -- like, on our way in, we had to avoid jumpers or bodies coming down. I remember seeing one about 20 feet away from me as we were approaching the end of the scaffolding before we went into Tower 1, and then as we got there, one landed five feet from me.

Then one guy stood and looked up, and it was like being in the military. He'd say, "Okay, come on. Oh, hold up. Something is coming down. Hold up. All right, come on. Come on," and it was bodies that were coming down.

Q. When you say you went to the command post, you said Tower 1, is that the north tower?

A. Yes.

Q. So you were operating basically from West Street?

A. At the time, I didn't know that. I found all that out later, which tower --

Q. Okay?

A. -- which tower we were in and whatever.

Q. All right. So that was where you saw the commissioner, McGovern --

A. Yes.

C. GAFFNEY

Q. -- in that lobby?

A. There was a bunch -- there was a command post set up in that lobby, but when I had come back down, they weren't in that lobby any more. That lobby was pretty much destroyed, and there was nobody in there.

Q. Okay. So you hooked up with 9 truck. I mean, you weren't ordered to, but you hooked -- do you know which staircase it was, A, B, whatever, something like that?

A. I'm pretty sure it was B. I'm not positive, but I'm pretty sure it was B. I know I came down the B, so I'm pretty sure it was the B I went up, because I used that as a reference for getting out. I knew I came up that way, so I knew my way down with that staircase.

Q. Okay.

A. I remember being on about the 13th Floor and opening the door. I heard a door being forced from the outside of the stairway. A company was trying to get in, so I went and opened the door for them, and that was the A stairway, I believe, but I can't tell you what company it was. I don't remember.

It was -- we were kind of like in a hurry. I just popped the door, let those guys in, and continued

C. GAFFNEY

searching the floor.

Q. Okay. And the stairway that you saw 65, that was B?

A. Yes.

Q. And Faust and McGovern, you figure were B, the B staircase?

A. Yes, it was the staircase I was in. That was B. I saw McGovern on there. I saw Faust. He was standing on the 10th Floor. I don't know -- he was standing in the doorway.

Q. Okay.

A. He was, like, telling people, okay -- no, he was, like, reassuring civilians, I guess, on their way out, and then when I was on my way down, it was only firemen, so I said to him, "Come on, Faust, get out. They are ordering us out. Get out." He said, "I'm going to wait for the chief."

Q. Okay. You came out the same way?

A. Yes.

Q. And --

A. As I came out of the stairs --

Q. -- you were running?

A. I remember making a right, climbing over a pile of crap, and there was glass, thick glass,

C. GAFFNEY

everywhere. It was like running on ice, you know, glass on top of glass sliding around.

I remember an ironworker being in the lobby, and I ran into the ironworker later. I wound up knowing him, but I didn't realize who he was at the time.

Q. Okay. If you saw Otto, who was with 24 -- did you see any other rigs in the street at any time, whether they were crushed or the way in?

A. On the way in, I saw Squad 18's rig was right in front, I think.

Q. In front of the tower or in front of the hotel?

A. In front of the tower.

Q. Okay.

A. In front of Tower 1. I think Lieutenant Giammona grabbed a mask out of there.

Q. Okay.

A. We went to 24 first on the way in, and there were no masks left or anything.

Q. Where was he parked?

A. He was on the corner -- he was on West Street facing south right off Vesey, and then it's the same place he was parked for the first trade center. That

C. GAFFNEY

sticks in my mind.

I was at that one, too, in '93, and Otto was driving also, and he parked in the same spot for both incidents.

Q. Okay. Now, when you were running out and everything, you didn't happen to notice any of the other front pieces, who they were?

A. What do you mean? The guys I was running with?

Q. Yes, or when you came back, did you see any other apparatus crushed or 6 --

A. I remember the civilians in the street, like they were in the lobby, like, pooling in the lobby instead of going out of the building.

I guess they were having a hard time getting over the debris and stuff, but coming down the stairs, there were no civilians in the stairway.

Q. Okay.

A. As I came out, Otto was standing in the middle of West Street at Vesey by the island. He was covered in white. He said he had -- he dove behind a wall or something and just got covered with the cloud. He was in shock.

Q. Okay. If you have nothing else, this

C. GAFFNEY

concludes the interview. Thank you very much.

A. Thank you. I mean, that's all I can remember. I mean, I remember seeing people in the street not that were in the building. I remember seeing companies, like, standing watching.

Q. Well, can you remember who they were?

A. I saw --

Q. And where they were?

A. I saw one of the guys from 55 engine on the opposite side of West Street at Vesey standing -- 33 engine was on that corner on Vesey facing east, I guess on the west side of West Street.

Q. And this is after the collapses or before?

A. This was after the first one, which I didn't even realize was a collapse until I got down to the street, but before the second.

Q. Okay, so they were on Vesey and West?

A. Right. They were on Vesey actually facing east.

Q. Anybody else?

A. I remember running into guys from 8 truck who were coming from company medical. They were -- they sent them back from the medical office.

Q. You don't know where you met them?

C. GAFFNEY

A. I met them by the water. I met them by the water. I met -- there were also two guys from 55 engine. I don't think they were working. Paddy Schuppel and Pete Metzger. I don't know if they were working or not, but I met them by the water. I don't think they were working. They must have come later. They were clean.

Q. Okay. If there is nothing else, we can conclude the interview.

A. I think that's about all I can remember right now.

Q. You can keep going as long as you want.

A. No, that's all I can remember really.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay, thank you very much.

File No. 9110314

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL PALONE

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 12, 2001. The time is 1515. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Michael Palone, fireman first grade, Engine Company 24 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place in the office of Engine Company 5 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Fireman Palone, please tell me what happened in your own words on September 11th, 2001.

A. On September 11th after the two planes hit the World Trade Center, I heard about the recall over the phone and headed into the city. When I arrived at the firehouse, a bunch of guys were getting into Captain Variale's pickup truck. I grabbed my stuff, jumped in the back of the pickup truck and went down Seventh Avenue down to the site.

As we got down to the site, there were also two car fires. We tried extinguishing car

fires on the way down. We had a problem with the water pressure. There was no water pressure out of the hydrants. We tried hooking up to a pumper, basically trying to put out the car fires, not too much success because of the water problem.

We went into World Trade Seven to try and get their standpipe system to possibly use their water off their tank on the roof. Then from there we met a bunch of people outside of 5, hooked up with Darren Lebow and Kevin -- what's Kevin's last name that used to work there?

Anyway, I hooked up with a couple of guys and went into the basement of five, got right next to the collapse, searched for people, searched through the cars in the bottom of five, couldn't find anybody. I went back up to the street level and ended up going around to the front of five where 5 Truck, 24 Engine was and went up onto the mezzanine into the building there and searched through there for a while. We were ordered out of there. We came out of there.

We went back down and hooked up with Craig Monahan, I believe, Jeff Anstead, myself,

Bobby Beddia and went from where we were on West Street under the walkway bridge. That would put us in between the two walkway bridges and across the pile of rubble into I believe it was the B stairway, where they were searching for Ladder 6.

We hooked up with a guy from rescue who was lowering down a civilian and tied the rope off from him. A guy from rescue in the top of the staircase lowered the civilian down and then slid down himself and then went down those stairs.

They were getting the woman Sylvia out, basically helped carry her out on the stretcher. 6 came out somewhere there when we were there. 6 Truck came out. We were there for a while trying to get Battalion Chief Prunty, who was trapped under the steel in the bottom of the staircase.

There were a couple of other companies down there; I'm not sure who. We were down there for a while until we were ordered off, because they were worried about Seven coming down. We ended up coming out of there and going off the rubble and then over towards the marina, cleaning up our eyes and just basically getting ourselves

back together until we went back to the firehouse. I don't really know times.

Q. Just a couple quick questions. Darren Lebow --

A. 5 Truck.

Q. He was from 5 Truck?

A. Yeah.

Q. You operated with him for quite --

A. Right. When we went down into the bottom of five, we got right next to the bottom of the collapse, and we were in there pretty close. Kevin Anderson was with us. It was me, Lebow, Kevin Anderson.

We basically grabbed any tools we could out of a Port Authority suburban that was down there. Anything that we thought we could use we grabbed and tried to do whatever we could.

Q. But it was just the three of you at that point?

A. It was the three of us at that point. Then when we came back up, we hooked up -- I think 5 Truck was there with the captain of 5 and the rest of 5 Truck and then hooked up with Monahan and Beddia and Anstead and then actually

went over to that B stairway.

Q. You saw 5 and 24's rigs?

A. Yes.

Q. Where were they located?

A. 5's ladder was going up to Five World.

I believe that was five world, and 24 Engine was just behind them.

Q. On what street?

A. On West Street.

Q. When you say the chief ordered you out -- you didn't say chief. You said somebody ordered you out of the building.

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you know who that was?

A. I think it might have been Blaich. I'm not sure. It was a division chief who was ordering us out for a while.

Q. When you said you hooked up with Monahan, Beddia and all of those guys, those are the members of Engine 24 and Ladder 5, just to clarify that?

A. Yes.

Q. And the guy from rescue that was going down, do you know what rescue it was?

A. I don't know what rescue it was. I think it might have been -- I'm not sure. I don't know.

Q. Okay.

A. He was up above us. He was looking to tie the rope off, I tied it off to the banister, and Jeff Anstead was with me. He went up to see if he could help him, but it was up there and everything was a little compromised. He didn't know what he was stepping on and everything else. It was just a little unstable.

Q. Okay. If you have nothing else, this will conclude the interview.

A. That's it.

Q. Okay. Thank you.

File No. 9110317

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER GEORGE RODRIGUEZ

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 11:01 a.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the New York City Fire Department, Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with George Rodriguez, firefighter first grade of Ladder 22, in the quarters of Ladder 22.

Q. George, just tell us the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. On September 11th we weren't dispatched to go down to the World Trade Center until the second plane hit the building. We responded by getting on the West Side Highway at 96th Street and subsequently went southbound until we reached the towers.

I was assigned to Ladder Company 22, but I'm a recent transfer from the engine. I happen to be an engine company chauffeur and was assigned to drive Engine 76 that day.

En route we met up with Ladder Company 25 on the West Side Highway. We traveled southbound together and arrived at the towers at approximately the same time.

Upon arrival I dropped off the members of my company, which was Engine 76 that day, on

Vesey and West. They proceeded with their equipment to the command post, and I proceeded to go east on Vesey to seek out a source of water and/or to assist any other chauffeurs I saw down there.

I first parked my apparatus approximately 75 feet east of West Street on Vesey. I sized up the situation. Pretty much all the hydrants in the area were taken.

At that point I grabbed some standpipe tools from my apparatus, and I proceeded to walk east on Vesey to assist any other chauffeurs as necessary. Pretty much all of that was being done.

I remember at that point looking up at the towers. The operation was growing in size. Many civilians were coming out the windows or being blown out the windows.

As much as I didn't want to, I went up on the concourse in between the north and south towers to actually see if there was any help I could render to anyone; there wasn't.

I came back down to the street. I met up with Commissioner Von Essen at that time. I

told the Commissioner what I saw on the concourse. His response is not that important.

So I proceeded to get back into my rig and drive down Vesey. I took a U turn and I came back. I saw the maintenance crew to Seven World Trade Center standing there watching the building. I gathered them up and asked them if they had fire pumps in the building. They did.

I had a Siamese directly across Washington Street on Vesey going into the towers, so I used the maintenance men and an engine company chauffeur from 26 Engine named Mike Incantalupo. I used him to hook up a source of water from their fire pumps to my rig and into the World Trade Center, which the Siamese was located right below Six World Trade Center, the U.S. Customs building.

At that point we were supplying the standpipe Siamese. All was going well with that. The operation was growing in intensity. At that point the preliminary sounds of the collapse started, the loud crackling sounds. We all started running, because I think the energy coming down through the cylinders of the building

because of the pancake, the energy came out first and then the actual debris started coming.

So we all ran. Myself and the chauffeur of 26 Engine grabbed about 30 civilians as well as the maintenance men, and we put them all in the basement of Seven World Trade Center. At that point all power was off in the buildings. The only means of egress was out onto Washington Street, which was totally covered with debris and ash. You couldn't get out the door. There was no means of egress from that particular point in the basement.

So I gave a mayday. I heard a lot of other maydays on the radio; I couldn't even pinpoint to you which ones. I gave a mayday: "Mayday, mayday, mayday. This is Engine 76 chauffeur to command post. I'm trapped in the basement of Seven World Trade Center with approximately 30 civilians and another fireman." I got no answer, but I figured guys were in much worse situations, so I just shut up on the radio and listened.

Two of the civilians didn't want to stay in the basement. They wanted to get out

because it was a smoke condition down there and a lot of ash. You couldn't really breathe that well, but it was much better than outside.

We tried to block the door so they wouldn't go out. The situation wasn't going to get good with that, so I stepped aside, let them run out. Unfortunately for them they ran to the left, which happened to be right towards Vesey Street, which was the wrong way to go. I never saw those two again.

It seemed like an eternity. As it started lifting, myself and the chauffeur of 26 Engine removed all the civilians to the right down Washington Street towards Barclay and evacuated them from the area.

At that point we still were hearing maydays over the radio from right in our area, from Vesey and Washington. So we made our way down to try and see if we can help another fireman. Actually the mayday was coming from -- I'm not sure if it was Vesey and Washington. There was a bridge there going from the Trade Center to seven world, and it was right under that area we were hearing the maydays from.

So we went down Washington, took a left, which is east on Vesey, and we started looking for this guy that was in trouble. No luck in finding him.

At that point that sound came back, and the second tower started to go, which happened to be tower number one. We did everything we could to make it back to Washington and turn northbound on Washington. As we turned the corner, the rubble started coming down, but the energy caught us first. I think it was a lucky thing because the energy actually picked us up and threw us about 40 feet.

We rolled on the ground. We kind of got separated. I had my mask on.

Q. You had your face piece on too?

A. No. I just had the mask on and the cylinder turned on. The other chauffeur didn't, so when we got separated he was in a real bad way.

I looked up. That was it. I didn't really realize I was alive until I started hearing him call my name. I searched around for him. I donned my face piece. I searched around

for him, found him, buddy-breathed with him. I took him down Washington, east on Barclay, north on whatever street that is and put him in an ambulance.

At that point I went back and I started searching for my company, which I thought both companies were gone because they had gone into the command post. After the second collapse there wasn't really much chatter on the radio. So the silence was actually the worst part of it all, you know?

Basically that's it. I really can't recall which companies I saw going into the buildings.

Q. Okay.

A. I saw companies going up on to the concourse. That's where a lot of civilians were coming and hitting the ground like water balloons. Prior to the collapses we grabbed a couple civilians out of there.

It was so crazy at that moment. There was just no answers on the radio. You just did all you could. My rig was gone. I thought my companies were gone. I knew a lot of other

companies were gone. You just picked an area and started digging.

You actually had to pass over seriously injured people to help more seriously injured people. That was insane in itself. The conception of that is crazy.

Q. Were you able to meet up with your company later or not?

A. The first person I saw was Chief McNally. I guess whatever situation he had been involved with, as soon as the situation got to a point where he could make it towards the buildings again, he came back in. He could barely even talk because of everything that was going on, myself included.

I heard Chief Harten from the 10th Battalion on the radio trying to get in touch with McNally, and McNally's radio died. So I said, "Don't worry, Chief, I'll send it for you." I couldn't get Harten either on the radio. The reason I know them, because they were both battalion chiefs here.

I told Chief McNally, "I'll go over there and I'll go personally deliver your

message." I went over and I did that. On the way we had helped a couple people out. On the way to go deliver the chief's message, I ran into my engine officer, Frank Farrington.

At that point we started to try and get a head count, all right, what have we got, who's alive, who's not alive. Let's start with our company, we'll group up, we'll go and get whoever is there.

There was a lot of firemen. The firemen that were remaining after the collapses were trying to regroup with their guys and then go back and help other people. That's pretty much what I found.

It turned out that all the guys in the engine that day made it. Then we started hearing the different truck names, they made it, and the only one in question at that point was Chief Picciotto and his aide, Gary Sheridan.

Then we got the orders that we were going to regroup. Bring out another command post. I'm not sure exactly where it was. It was probably north on the West Side Highway. Way north on the West Side Highway, they got another

command post ready. They had a full recall. I met up with my company, and I came back and we started searching for people.

That's pretty much my whole account of the situation.

Q. All right. Thanks a lot, George.

A. Thank you, Chief.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 11:13, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110318

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FERNANDO CAMACHO

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time is 11:17 a.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan, Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Fernando Camacho of Ladder 22, in the quarters of Ladder 22.

Q. Fernando, describe the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. On the morning of September 11th I was on house watch, and it was about 8:00. A little bit after 8, because I was watching the news, I saw the first airplane or it would seem, an explosion on one of the towers; I believe it was the north tower. Chief Picciotto came down, called the dispatcher and went out on his way down.

Approximately 15 minutes later, both the engine and the truck, we got our tickets to go down to the World Trade Center. It took us about maybe 20 minutes to get there. We came out of our truck prepared to receive our orders, walked down to the command post which was across the street on the West Side Highway. It was across the street from the north tower. We

waited there approximately about 15 minutes for our orders.

After we waited for a while, we were told to go into the lobby of the Vista Hotel. We proceeded along the right side of the highway, basically the same side of the command post, down to the south pedestrian bridge, under the pedestrian bridge, to avoid being hit by bodies and debris going down.

We came in through the corner of Liberty and the West Side Highway into the Vista Hotel. There was a setup, a small command post or small gathering of firefighters there with a couple of chiefs. I can't tell who they were. I don't remember that.

We were in there approximately another ten minutes. Lieutenant Riley came back from talking to the chief, and we were assigned to go to the 75th floor. We got our equipment together and started walking up. Ladder 25 had gone ahead of us about five minutes before we got assigned to go to the 75th floor.

We went across the lobby of the hotel, going north, and we exited and made a right going

towards the second tower, the south tower. We must have walked about 100-200 feet to revolving doors, which led into a hallway to where the mall was. I could see maybe 20, 25 civilians and I believe Ladder 25, which was about another 100 to 150 feet ahead of us.

As we came in through the revolving doors, the lights went out. A second or two later everything started to shake. You could hear explosions. We didn't know what it was. We thought it was just a small collapse.

As I looked straight ahead of me, I saw total darkness. Everything was coming our way like a wave. The firefighters that were ahead of us and the civilians that were ahead of us totally disappeared.

We turned around. We were all pretty much within ten feet of each other: lieutenant, chauffeur, roof, OV, can. As we turned around, I ran probably maybe ten feet and that's when the body of the building or body of the collapse hit, and we were flying through the air basically. I must have flown 30, 40 feet through the air.

Then total quiet. You couldn't

breathe. You couldn't see anything. None of the equipment worked. My face piece was gone, flashlight, helmet. There were about maybe five or six civilians around us. We tried to get them out, as we tried to make our way out.

We did a perimeter search. Everything behind us was blocked and to our sides. We came back out basically through the same way we came into the building. We were facing the West Side Highway now, but there was a hole in the side of the building. So that's how we found our way out.

The only thing I know is that it was the roof, the OV and myself that got out. I had the can. Lieutenant Riley and the chauffeur we couldn't find. We didn't know if they were trapped or they made their way out in some other fashion. We found out later that they did make their way out, through another exit or behind us.

The West Side Highway was still pretty clear. There wasn't a lot of debris in front of us. We made our way north underneath the pedestrian bridge that's to the north. As we approached the rig again, I was being tended by

EMS for head wounds.

Five minutes after that the north tower started to lean.

Q. You saw it leaning?

A. Yeah.

What happened was that as I was standing there and getting bandaged, somebody said the tower is leaning. So me and Gorman -- he had the irons. We turned around and looked, and we could see the tower leaning. As it started to lean, it just came straight down. Now we're running again.

Q. Which way was it leaning? Towards West Street?

A. The tower was leaning not towards -- it leaned somewhat northwest but not -- it came down pretty straight after it leaned. It didn't really continue to lean. It just leaned a little bit and then came straight down.

Basically that's it. We ran and we went into the high school that's I believe somewhere --

Q. On Chambers.

A. Chambers, yeah. It might be Chambers,

a little further up from Chambers Street. We came back out after the cloud passed us and started helping out people that couldn't breathe or were injured.

That's basically the bulk of the information I can give.

Q. Fine. Let me get one thing straight. From the time you noticed the leaning to the time of it coming down, are we talking about seconds here?

A. No more than three, four seconds.

Q. All right. Thank you for all your help, Fernando.

A. No problem.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 11:27, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110319

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN MALLEY

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: It's December 12th, 2001. The time is 11:31 a.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan, Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter John Malley of Ladder 22, in the quarters of Ladder 22.

Q. John, just tell us the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. We responded on the second fifth alarm, work our way down. The streets were kind of cleared, and the police had everything opened. We got there pretty fast; I don't know how fast, but record time to get all the way down there from here.

We pulled up on West Street, maybe a block away from the north tower, maybe half a block; I'm not sure. We grabbed our gear and worked our way down. We were right under the north tower when we realized people were jumping right very close to us. So we had to run across the street to avoid being hit by debris and people.

As we're halfway across the street, we

hear on the radio about an urgent message or a mayday message about a third plane en route. So we kind of froze there. We said now what do we do? Do we go back into the building or take cover under where the command post was in the garages.

So the men went to the garage, and the officer went to the command post. We stood there and watched everybody jumping and waiting for our assignments, for our officer to come back.

People started to jump with such a -- it was maybe one jumper every five seconds at one point, every ten seconds. Then they just started jumping like one every one second, two seconds. There were people just coming down like it was raining people.

One of the officers -- I don't remember who -- said that's it, we've got to do something. Truck companies on the left, engine companies on the right, we'll start going single file. We can't wait any longer.

So we were going in not knowing where this third plane, whether this plane was coming or not. I remember hearing I think it was Ganci

asking if we could get confirmation on whether the military can down the plane or not. I didn't hear whether it was or wasn't. All I know is we were going in regardless.

We proceeded to hug the west side of West Street to avoid any debris. We went from the north walkway to the south walkway pedestrian bridge, where we went from the pedestrian bridge one at a time, ran into the Liberty entrance of the Vista Hotel.

At that point we were just mulling around in the lobby, waiting for our assignments. I believe I might have seen the guys from 25. I was kind of shocked, so I don't really know who I was talking to.

I was dreading walking up the stairs. I was worried about having to hump those stairs, because my heart was already racing about 150 beats a minute. It was racing, and I knew that claiming those stairs were going to make it almost unbearable.

We proceeded. We got our assignment to work the 75th floor and above of the south tower. We proceeded through. We went north through the

Vista Hotel lobby into the atrium, I believe, of the north tower, made a right turn, proceeded east in the atrium, preparing to go through revolving doors into -- I don't know because it was pitch-black. We were walking into darkness.

As we walked through those revolving doors, that's when we felt the rumble. I felt the rumbling, and then I felt the force coming at me. I was like, what the hell is that? In my mind it was a bomb going off.

The pressure got so great, I stepped back behind the columns separating the revolving doors. Then the force just blew past me. It blew past me it seemed for a long time. In my mind I was saying what the hell is this and when is it going to stop?

Then it finally stopped, that pressure which I thought was a concussion of an explosion. It turns out it was the down pressure wind of the floors collapsing on top of each other. At that point everything went black, and then the collapse came. It just rained on top of us. Everything came. It rained debris forever. I was semiburied. I thought I might be the only one

alive at that point, because it was just an incredible amount of debris falling around us.

Although I was relatively unhurt -- it was miraculous. I couldn't believe I was still alive, with the amount of debris that came down. At that point I was amazed I was still alive. When I stood up, I thought I was going to drown in the dust, because I didn't know the dust was coming because it was pitch-black.

Then I went to put on my mask to don the face piece. I don't know if my face was so covered with dust or the mask was covered with dust, but it was pretty useless.

I hopped up when I could. I heard one of my members calling Ladder 22 to have a roll call. So we pretty much were scurrying around in the dark, we found each other, everybody but the lieutenant. We couldn't find the lieutenant. We had all five members.

There were secondary explosions, I don't know, aerosol cans or whatever. But we're in the darkness. We see basically the glow of a flashlight and still things coming down. The noise, the explosions, whatever it was. I don't

know, we just realized we had to get the heck out of there.

We still couldn't breathe. There was still heavy dust. So we started to make our way out. We said let's dig our way out and then we'll come back for the lieutenant.

As I started to proceed in the direction I felt was the way I came in, I felt wind, so I walked towards the wind. The guys I was with were getting further away, and I was trying to explain to them that it's this way. I said, "It's this way. It's this way. I can feel the wind." They were saying, "No, no. It's this way." So I continued on my own.

I met a civilian. The civilian asked me what he should do. I said, "Stay with me. I'm going to walk into the wind, and we'll get out of here." I continued to walk, and then I realized that I was about a foot away from a fire truck. I felt I must be outside now, although I wasn't a hundred percent sure because I could have been in a garage. I don't know because it was still completely dark.

As I was at the fire truck, I heard my

lieutenant calling me, so I answered him. I relayed to him that everybody was okay and we were working our way outside. He said he's on his way outside, that we would meet outside.

That's when I realized I was outside, because something landed right behind me. It sounded like a body. The same sound that I heard before when the bodies were landing was similar to the sound that I just heard.

Then it occurred to me that I was in harm's way right now, because I'm underneath this thing and I could get hit and not know because I can't see it coming. So I decided to run what I thought was west. It turns out it was. I ran across the street. I was tripping over people and hoses and everything.

I worked my way up to that green fence. There was a green fence. I had worked my way back into the Vista Hotel, and that's how I got out. I could start to see daylight north. So I started walking towards the daylight. The first time I stopped I was under the north foot bridge.

While I was standing there, things started to clear up. One of the chiefs that I

know, Chief McNally, told me to stand post on Vesey and West Street and try to get everybody I could to go north to get away from the collapse zone.

So while I was standing there, EMS workers started to try to clean me up because I was completely covered in dust. My eyes were almost sealed shut with the dust.

While I was there I saw a few guys, Kevin Gorman and Camacho. I told them we have to work our way north from here. I don't know where the other guys were. I just remember pretty much at that point hearing on the police radio that the building looked like -- the north tower was going to come down.

At that point I didn't know the building came down. I thought I was still in the explosion. I didn't know the whole building had come down.

So while I was on the corner of Vesey and West, the police, everybody, started herding everybody north of there, saying that the building was coming down, the building was coming down.

So I got to about Barclay and west, and I looked up and I started to see the building crumbling down. That's when I turned around and just started running. I believe I dove in the bushes around Murray Street and was engulfed again in the cloud.

That's pretty much it. Then we worked our way north to the command post. We were relieved there by the guys that were on the recall. They started taking our masks and gear and everything.

I was so covered with insulation dust and everything, I was itching like crazy. I hosed myself off on West Street. It wasn't doing anything, so we all got together at that point. We were standing at the command post, wherever it was, north of the Trade Center.

At that point the lieutenant said he was going to go let them know that all our members were accounted for. We told him that we were going to try to find a local firehouse to go shower off.

That was it.

Q. Okay, John. Thank you very much.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 11:45,
and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110321

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN BREEN

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 12th, 2001. The time is 3:17 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with John Breen, firefighter fourth grade from Engine 74. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Engine 74.

Q. John, just tell us the events of September 11th.

A. On that morning we got the run -- after the second building was hit, that's when we got the run. It was after 9:00. It came over the voice alarm. The whole battalion was called to go. us, 25 Truck, 47 Engine, 76 and 22 and 35 and 40 I believe were the companies that I heard over the voice alarm to respond.

We went down the West Side Highway. We had a clear go all the way down. It was no problem as far as traffic going down that way. We pulled up on the West Side Highway. We were on West Street. Where we parked I believe was Vesey Street. I probably will tell you about

that later on. I'm almost positive it was Vesey Street where we parked our rig.

As we parked there, one of the other trucks I noticed that was there was 25 Truck. I believe Joe Collins from 25 Truck. I believe that was who he was. He was riding extra for 25. I heard he was supposed to go to a detail to 76 and 22.

I was just talking to one of the details that's working here today. He's from 25. He said Joe Collins was riding extra. He came over to our rig, and he was asking for a mask, and he was given our chauffeur's mask.

Myself, Lieutenant Nichols, Jeff Johnson, Pat Carey and Ruben Correa were walking down West Side to West Street underneath the pedestrian bridge. We were walking towards the Marriott Hotel. I was told by Lieutenant Nichols that dispatch called him over the radio and we were told to report to the Marriott Hotel, the old Vista Hotel, which is Three World Trade Center.

As we were walking underneath, we didn't see any bodies falling out. We did see

one body on the ground, and that's when the lieutenant told us to walk as far away from the building as we could and just to keep our heads up for any falling bodies.

We walked into the lobby of the Marriott. The only other company I saw that I knew down there at the time that I know was 47 Engine. The chief that was working there that morning, I wish I knew who he was -- I really don't know -- at the command center. I really don't know what his name was, but he was telling us to -- the engines to line up on one side and the trucks on the other side.

We were told first we were going to go into the south tower. Then there was a report of people stuck or possible hotel guests still up in the Marriott. A couple of units were told to go up there.

The companies I do know that went up there with us is 74 Engine, 54 Engine, 11 Truck and I believe, but I am not positive, 23 Engine. We were told to go up to the 22nd floor. We took the elevator up to the 18th floor. We walked up four flights of stairs to the top floor.

Up on the top floor, it was a pool, spa, gym equipment, saunas. It was just a workout area and a spa area with a couple of office spaces. We did see part of -- I didn't see it, but Jeff Johnson told me later on he did see part of the landing gear actually fell right through the roof and it was in one of the Jacuzzis in another room.

There was nobody up there. We did a search up there. There was no fire up there either, no bodies to report. We were going to take an elevator down. I don't believe there was an elevator on 22. We walked down one flight.

We went down the south stairwell. We walked it down one flight to the 21st floor. We went to the elevator, which is more -- from the south stairwell, we walked a little bit north down the hallway, waiting for the elevator. There was about 20 of us. Again, this was 54 Engine, 74, 11 Truck and I believe 23 Engine.

As we were waiting for the elevator to take us down, it was running a little too slow or stuck on one of the floors. My lieutenant, Lieutenant Nichols, said we're better off walking

down. We were going to go down I believe to the lobby, and I think we were going to go to the south tower, which is I believe connected, somehow connected to the Marriott.

We started walking down the hallway towards the south stairwell. It was my company that was leading the way. Pat Carey I believe was in front, Jeff Johnson, Lieutenant Nichols, myself, Ruben Correa, then the other companies.

As we were walking, that's when the south tower came down. Pretty much we just stood where we were. There was nowhere we could go. We were just stuck in this hallway.

Pretty much when all was said and done, we gathered ourselves. We were doing a head count as far as my company, and we noticed that we were calling for Ruben and Ruben was behind me in the hallway. Him and the other companies were behind us. I was about ten feet away in the hallway from being one of the missing. As far as we turned around and we looked, that side of the hallway was all covered in debris and rubble. All the lights were out. There were no lights. We had to use flashlights.

So it was just basically four of us that got out. The chauffeur, by the way, was back at the rig. The chauffeur did not go with us. He was back at the rig. That was Mike Shagi. I forgot to mention that earlier.

So pretty much at this point it was the three companies I just mentioned and Ruben Correa that was trapped. It was about 16 guys, roughly. There was about four of us that were still on that floor.

We called a mayday. We couldn't hear anything. Nobody responded. We didn't know what was going on. We didn't even know that the whole building came down. We called a mayday. We couldn't hear anything. However, we did hear one mayday, and I believe it was from 4 Truck, one of the members from 4 Truck. His mayday was given. He didn't know what floor he was on. He was just saying that he was with 4 Truck, he was running out of air, please come get him.

We couldn't do anything at that point. We just were trying to get out to guys that we had. We were trying to find a void. We started moving some of the rubble pieces. We couldn't

find anything and started yelling. We called for guys' names and tried to listen for any names. We couldn't hear anything.

We walked a floor down below, which is the 20th floor, and there was more rubble that way. Basically we saw, okay, we're trapped inside of all this debris. There were two floors of rubble. My lieutenant made the decision at that point for us we have to get out, try to get some help, especially for the guys trapped and for the guy who was calling the mayday for 4 Truck.

We went down the south stairwell. We met up with members from 12 Truck, and there were some other members. I don't remember who they were. When we went down, there were about ten members in all that we met up with.

We got down to about the sixth floor. They were in one of the hotel suites. I believe it was the presidential suite. I heard later on that's what it was. This was on the sixth floor. I heard it was looking out -- later on Jeff Johnson -- I'm only going by what he said. I don't know what we were looking at outside this

suite. There was a whole section of the building that was gone. I was told later on that that was West Street that it was out looking over.

Basically the bottom line was we were going to lower ourselves down by rope because we heard from 12 Truck that they couldn't go any further down the stairwell. This is on the sixth floor of the south stairwell we went down. They were going to lower themselves by rope.

I told them we passed some roof rope on the way down. A couple guys went up to get it. We even breached a wall, and me and Pat Carey were tying off two and a half lengths. We were going to even use some of the rollups to lower ourselves down.

My officer said this is just too dangerous, it's too unstable to do this. He made the decision to try to do something. Him and the senior man felt that they could do something as far as maybe there's a way to get down the stairwell that we overlooked.

It was a good thing we did, because when we went down the stairwell, we went down about a floor or a half landing, and Jeff Johnson

hopped over one of the railings, started moving sheetrock. It was just lightweight sheetrock. It wasn't nothing heavy-duty or extra heavy or anything like that. It was just basic lightweight sheetrock. He started moving it out of the way.

He went down to about the fifth or the fourth floor landing or the fourth floor. He yelled back up that there were some people down there. There were some civilians. We were later on told that they worked with The New York Times or Time magazine. We still don't know what it was. There were five businessmen, all men. To this day I still don't even know who they are. I tried to contact the, and tried through New York Times, but I got no response.

Basically everybody else at that point started following us down, just started coming one after another, started going down the stairwell.

I heard later on -- in fact, I went to his memorial service. I heard a couple of guys from 12 Truck made the decision to go back up and see if they could help out the mayday from 4

Truck. I heard one of them was Mike Mullan, the lieutenant, and I think a rotating fireman. I wish I knew his name, but I don't. But I heard that they made the decision to go back up to try to help out the mayday.

We made our way down to about the third floor, the rest of us. It was maybe about ten in all, probably about like four of us from 74 and maybe six from 12 truck and a few others from -- I don't know what other company it was. I still don't know to this day.

We got down to about the third floor with also the five businessmen. I think we were facing east at that point. I would say we were facing east or maybe north. I'm just looking at the way the building was shaped right here. It might have been the north section of the building, facing north or east, either way.

When we got down there, Jeff Johnson and Pat Carey hopped out. There was more or less like a little patio about half a story down that they hopped out on. There was a lightweight beam that they situated where we could get these civilians down.

Either way, you could slide down this beam or you could go down the other half landing and hop over. This is as far as we can go, because this whole section of the third floor was still open like that. This was a big opening to get outside.

I was staying back. I wanted to feel like I was doing something. I was helping out these civilians, making sure that they got down the beam, that they slid down the beam okay.

It got to a point where everybody was starting to get out. It was me, two more civilians left and maybe two guys I believe from 12 Truck that were still in there waiting to get out, and that's when the north tower started to come down. We just kind of stood and braced where we were.

One of the civilians with me was about 80 years old. As the building was coming down, I was yelling to see if he was still there. He said he was. I held his hand just to make sure we were together in case we were trapped.

When the dust settled, the hole was open and we were lucky enough that that happened.

Everybody was pretty much scattered all over the place. My lieutenant was in front of me. That half landing or patio that he was on where the beam was situated, he was down there. He was a little bit trapped, but he was able to get out. There was all kinds of rubble all around him. He was very lucky that he was alive. It was sort of like a bunker that he was in. It was just all debris around him. He was able to squeeze his way out of that.

Two of the brothers from 12 Truck, they were okay, and the two civilians were okay. I heard Jeff Johnson yelling -- I found out later on that he had gone to the second floor. There was a way to get in there. There was some kind of a sliding door.

He had gone around a corner of the building, which I believe would have been the south side or possibly the east side of the building. I'm really not positive. He had gotten down to the second floor and hid behind a beam. He was with three of the civilians in that hallway.

Pat Carey, he was yelling for Pat. I

didn't know where Pat was either. I thought Pat was gone. Somehow he had gotten down to the second floor, but he lost contact with us. He didn't have a radio. We had lost him. I thought he was gone.

I got out. I was helping the civilians down. Once we got out, Lieutenant Nichols got himself out. At that point I was yelling for Pat. I was yelling and yelling. At this point we knew we couldn't even do a mayday. We were just trying to get ourselves out. Myself and the lieutenant and the two other guys from 12 Truck, we helped the two civilians out. We walked them out.

By the way, at this point I don't know what happened to the other members. I think and I hoped that they did -- I'm pretty sure that they did because I met up with 12 Truck. All of their guys got out. I heard later on that the only guys that didn't get out -- all the guys that survived the first collapse, the only ones that didn't get out was Mike Mullan, the officer, and the rotator that went up to respond to the mayday. I heard later on that they got out.

Somehow they went the wrong way.

So the only ones at that point that I saw visibly get out was myself, Lieutenant Nichols, the two civilians and then the two guys from 12 Truck. Jeff Johnson, I thought he had gone around another direction and got the three civilians out another way, because I did hear his voice but I heard he was okay.

Although he was on the second floor, I didn't know at the time he was where he was. But he was pretty much stuck on the second floor. I thought he had gone out through another section of the building and walked out.

That's how confusing it was. Everybody pretty much was just trying to get out and walk their own way. As far as me, I heard Jeff's voice, and the lieutenant said he was okay. So I knew Jeff enough to be a senior man, I knew he was okay. The only ones that I was really worried about at that point that I knew was missing was Pat Carey. So I yelled and called his name.

We couldn't do anything at that point, so we started walking out. I believe we were in

the atrium? Is this called the atrium?

Q. I'm not sure.

A. I believe we were walking in the atrium. I think we were walking towards Two World Trade Center. The south tower, I think we were walking pretty much among the rubble and everything there. I think we got out and walked out on Liberty Street.

As we were walking among the debris of the fallen building, a couple guys from rescue came over. They helped us with the two civilians. I told them that there were missing members. I pointed to the Marriott. I told them basically that on the 21st floor, it was the first collapse.

We had the three companies plus Reuben, where they were trapped. But it was useless by that point because the floor wasn't even there. There was only about four stories to that building left.

The other one I talked about was Pat Carey. I said I saw him last on the third floor of the Marriott. It ended up that Pat got out okay. He was trapped on the second floor. He

was actually separated from Jeff and everybody else, and he actually jumped out, found an opening and jumped out, and actually fractured his cocyx bone and has several herniated disks.

Jeff Johnson made it out too. Although I didn't know at the time, I thought he was out, but he was still stuck on the second floor with the three civilians. He made his way out another way. They kind of finagled their way down and they got out okay.

From there, me and the lieutenant basically just walked towards the park. What's the name of that park? Battery Park. That's where I met Jeff. Basically we were calling for Mike Shagi. We found out later on when he was running he was getting short breath and everything like that, and he went to the hospital for some air, to be treated. We found out he was okay later on.

As I mentioned before, we were on Vesey Street when we were out where the park was. We were walking on some of the south streets, I guess Albany Street or Carlisle, one of those streets. We kind of made our way up Trinity or

Church, and then we kind of made our way down to Vesey. That's when we found our rig over there. Our rig was parked on Vesey.

I still don't know all the companies that were with us that we ran into in after the second collapse. But as far as I know, the companies that we did meet up with was 11 Truck, 54 Engine and I'm pretty sure it was 23 Engine.

Q. That's it, John?

A. That's it.

Q. Thanks for all your help, John.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 3:38, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110322

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOSEPH GALASSO

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 12th, 2001. The time is 1607 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual, Firefighter Sixth Grade Joseph Galasso from Engine 212, who was the backup on September 11th. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Okay, Joe, you can start whenever you want.

A. After the first plane hit, we were here, actually. We could see the towers actually from here. So after the first plane hit, we saw it on the news. So we came up here to look out the window, and we saw it. We watched the second plane hit. Just as the second plane hit, that's when we received the alarm.

We were going there. On the way there, we hit a little traffic. We were going to turn onto the Manhattan Bridge but instead we were told to take the Brooklyn Bridge. So we had to back up. We were on our way to get on the Brooklyn Bridge.

We drove down I'm not sure which street. I think we came down Liberty. We parked on Liberty. We got out. We grabbed our rollups, we grabbed our spare cylinders. I remember walking past 10 and 10's quarters.

At that point Lieutenant Brosnan told us to keep walking down Liberty. We went into one of the buildings on Liberty to go through, because we saw debris falling. We didn't know what was falling. It looked like debris. So to be safe, for our safety, the lieutenant brought us through another building with one of their attendants.

Q. Were both towers hit at this point in time?

A. Both towers were hit, because we watched the second tower hit over here. When the second tower was hit, that's when we got the alarm.

So we went through a building, and we came out on -- I don't know exactly the street, but it was where that pedestrian walkway is to go to the Financial Center. We came out over there. We went two at a time, because debris was still

falling. We stood underneath the walkway for protection.

Then we went into the hotel. I guess that's the Marriott Hotel. I saw a couple different companies there. 238 was there, and a couple other firemen were there that I didn't know. We were there, and that's when the lieutenant went to talk to a chief. He came back and told us we were going to the 74th floor. I don't know which tower, to be sure. I don't know. He just said the 74th floor.

At that time we got all our stuff. We made one of I guess the clerks of the hotel show us the way into the concourse level. We got into the concourse level. We walked maybe about 100 feet, 200 feet. The lieutenant said, "Take a break here for a second, I've got to go ask to find another stairwell."

At that point we put our stuff down. In a matter of seconds after that -- at this point when we came in, there were people getting evacuated. I guess there were cops down there and stuff like that. But there were all pedestrians coming out. They were pretty calm.

I was shocked to see how calm these people were.

As we got in there, like I said, the lieutenant walked away for a second to find a stairwell, told us to wait. At that point, not even a few seconds later, the lights went out and you heard -- it sounded like a waterfall almost. You just saw people running. The lights went out, and it got dark. You just saw parts of buildings coming down.

We ran and made a left. There's like a little bend. We made a left and went into a doorway. At that point I just sat there and waited and held my helmet. It just stopped. Everything was dark and people were screaming. Everybody stopped screaming. You couldn't see anything. It was all dark, dusty.

Somebody yelled, "Just stay calm. There's firemen here. Stay with the firemen." So at that point we all regrouped. We were yelling, "212, 212." I think there were five of us or six of us at that point. We all regrouped. We found each other. We put our flashlights on.

One of the members here, Firefighter Picciano, asked if anybody knew a way out: "Does

anybody work here? Does anybody know a way out?" There was a maintenance man actually there. He saw a store, and he said, "I know a way out of here." So we said, "Okay, hold onto us. We'll lead with the flashlights."

At that point there were just people that were grabbing onto my arms, grabbing everybody else. I was holding onto one of the other firemen just to find a way out. So at that point this maintenance man -- I still don't know who he was -- led us to an exit.

Maybe three of us took a bunch of people to one exit, which there were escalators going up. I think that let you out on Vesey. We led a whole bunch of people out the escalator. Two or three other firemen from the company went to the left with another individual, and they found another doorway, opened it up and led the people out that way. So we led all these people out.

Sorry, I need to backtrack. Before we went back into the building, ESU cops were telling us there are reports of a third and fourth plane coming. They're leaving, we're

walking in, and they're yelling there's reports of a third and fourth plane.

I guess when the first building came down I actually thought it was another plane hit at that time. I didn't know the building came down.

We led the people out. We cleared everybody out that was with us. At that point we went back in to look for more people just to see if there were any more people there. We searched around. We walked around, went down to the PATH train to see if anybody was down there. That was clear. At this point Engine 212 was there, a couple of guys had FBI jackets on, there were maybe about two or three, and I think a couple of cops were there.

We were searching around, searching. We backtracked a little bit from where we came from. At that point there was a little fire there. One of the guys tried to put it out with one of the house lines, but there was no pressure. It was dead. So we just left that.

I don't know who yelled, but somebody yelled, "We see somebody. There's somebody

underneath a bunch of debris." We pulled all the debris off. He had this round face that was all full of blood. He was struggling to breathe at this point. Of course he was like 250, 260 pounds, 300 pounds.

We found a chair, a regular chair. We put him on the chair. Between the time when the first building came down, it felt like hours but we were in there for a while. At that point we put him on the chair. We took turns carrying him out.

At this point you couldn't really hearing anything on the radio. It was like in and out, in and out. I remember somebody yelling "We've all got to get out. We've all got to get out." They're saying, "Everybody get out of the building."

So at that point we put the guy in the chair and took turns carrying him out. We went out like a little bit of steps to the landing and a little bit of steps and came out on Vesey. Five World Trade we came out of.

I can remember inside the hallway was the McDonald's sign. On top it said the mall.

We came out of there. There was just white debris, white powder everywhere.

There was a rig right across the street. I don't remember what company it was. There was a mail truck right across the street, because I guess the post office was there.

At that point -- again, not even -- I would say about 40 seconds, we get to the middle of the street with this individual, and you heard like a loud "rrrrr." Everything started shaking. We thought it was another plane.

What we did, we all separated. Me and two other guys, Walker and Murphy, we went back to the building. Picciano and Brosnan ran away from the building. At that point we just knelt down in the doorway. We knelt down, and I held on.

The pressure from the collapse, I guess, it was like a heavy snowstorm when you're trying to walk and you're trying to push and fight it. You try to fight it, and it just pushed us all back. I remember just letting go of Walker.

At that point, to tell you the truth, I

thought I was dead, because I was all by myself now. This whole time I was I guess, not happy, but I felt safe because we were all together the whole time. At this point I was by myself, and it was pitch dark. I had the dirt in my mouth and everything.

I thought I got blown back into the building, so I started yelling, "Walker and 212, anybody." Finally he acknowledged. He happened to be right next to me and I didn't know it.

At that point you couldn't see anything. I put my mask on at that point. Then we regrouped. Me, Walker and Murphy, we all regrouped, the three of us. At that point we thought we had lost the lieutenant. We thought we had lost Picciano and Brosnan, because they went the other way.

We came out of Five World Trade. At that point then it was just like an eerie quiet. Everything was quiet. We couldn't even find those FBI guys that were with us or the cops that were with us.

It was an eerie quiet. We finally saw daylight. We saw the sun and said let's walk.

We walked and walked up West Broadway. I remember that the rig was on fire at that point, and the postal truck was on fire. There were little fires everywhere. We were just trying to climb over like I beams and stuff.

We walked to West Broadway, and we just kept walking. At that time we were saying to ourselves let's just get as far away as we could. If these buildings come down, they're going to take out a couple of blocks. We still didn't know the buildings came down at that point.

We walked to Duane Street, and somebody -- I think it was a cop -- told us there's a firehouse right here. We went and made a right, and it was Engine 7. At that point we went there. From there we just sat there and waited. That's when the ambulance came and took us all in.

We finally met up with the other two, Picciano and Brosnan. They wound up walking there. Somehow some way they walked there. We all met up, and that's when we went in the ambulance to Forest Hills.

Q. Anybody else you remember seeing there?

A. It's weird, I remember seeing a kid I went to parochial school with that I graduated with, James Pappageorge, in the hotel. I remember saying hello. I don't know what company he's from. I remember saying hello to him. The lieutenant was saying, "Come on, let's go." We went into the concourse, and I never saw him after that. That's the only guy I can remember.

I don't know the guys' names from 238, but they're in the same area over here so I recognized a couple of them. I don't know which way they went either. Pappageorge specifically, I know him because we said hello to each other because we went to school together. I don't know which way they went. All I know is that we got -- somebody was with us because everywhere we walked was the right place.

Q. Anything else, Joe?

A. That's about it.

CHIEF KING: The time is 1620 hours,
and this interview is concluded.

File No. 9110323

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JAMES MURPHY

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 12th, 2001. The time is 1649 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen King, Safety Battalion, FDNY. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, firefighter second grade James MURPHY from Engine Company 212. This interview is concerning the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Jim, you can start talking whenever you'd like.

A. The first thing I remember is hearing this was a second alarm over the voice system. Second alarm, World Trade Center, it came over. We were in the kitchen. We said let's turn on the TV and see if there's anything, basically, because I worked in the city, sometimes something like the World Trade Center will make the TV.

So we turned on the TV, and they didn't have it yet on New York 1. About maybe 30 seconds into it, they had it. They just set it up. The anchor said, "We just got word that there's a fire in the World Trade Center, and we'll go to a camera" I think from the Empire

State Building.

They did that, and you could see the extent of the fire on the World Trade Center, a huge hole. Nobody knew what it was. We didn't know if it was a plane yet or anything. Everybody in the kitchen was just like, oh, my God.

Then the guy on the news got a call from somebody who was on the West Side Highway, I think, and he said that a big tire came down and landed on a car in front of him or something like that. You think it's a plane, and then you see the hole in it and you still don't think it's a 747 or 767. You still think it's like a Piper Cub. I was just thinking that from the hole, it might have been packed with explosives.

After that I ran up to the roof on the third floor with me and Eric Bernstein. We were watching it. We could see it from here. We have an unobstructed view. The other guys came up too. All six of us were on the roof.

We were sitting around looking at it, and I remember one guy saying, "You're going to earn your pay today, guys." I just remember

that. Then we saw the second one come up. It looked like it was coming up the East River from here.

I guess it was coming from the south. I thought it banked over the East River, which is what it looked like. I thought it made a left over the East River and went right into it going from east to west. But as it turns out, it came from the south. Then we saw it just go right into the building and explode.

I remember talking to Eric. I remember Eric saying something, "Oh, my God, there's another plane." I was saying to him, "That plane is closer to us. It's really not a big plane going towards the building." Two seconds later it rammed into the building. You don't expect it. We just freaked.

About a minute after that we got the call to go. I guess it was a minute or so. We shot down Tenth, down Park Avenue. We rode on the dividers because traffic -- we rode in between the highway where they parked the cars, we rode up there, over those until we got basically to where the Gowanus -- basically to

around 207, 101. We made the turn to go over the Manhattan Bridge by accident. We figured out it was an accident. We backed out and went over to the Brooklyn Bridge.

Two guys jumped on the back. I don't know who they were. Somebody just told me. One of the guys on the rig said, "Two guys just jumped on the back." So I never saw them jump on, but we stopped, let them jump on, and we went over the bridge.

That was it. We got over to the other side, and we went down Broadway. We made a right on Liberty. We pulled up, I guess it was like 20 feet from Church Street and Liberty. We were about maybe 20 feet or 50 feet. We were close to Church Street, right by a fruit stand, because I couldn't get out of the rig, we had to pull up.

After that we got out. We grabbed our hose, and we went straight down Liberty Street. I just remember looking up and seeing the building on fire. It seemed really high. You could hear it a little bit, and you couldn't hear anything else except the fire. It was a beautiful day out.

There were papers all over the place and the smoke and everything, but the smoke wasn't on our level at all. There was nobody else around.

We walked down Liberty Street. We walked past 10's quarters. We ran into a guy, he looked like -- I don't know what he looked like. He had a white shirt on. He had a helmet on, not a fireman's helmet. I think I can remember this right. He said, "Follow me. I can take you through. There's stuff falling from the building."

He took us through the Deutsche Bank building like through the middle of it. It was down whatever street that is where 10's on. We went through it, and we came out another street underneath that. I'm not sure. It's Greenwich Street or something like that. Then we went back onto Liberty Street.

The guy warned us, he said there's body parts all over the place. There were body parts everywhere, like all over, body parts and all sorts of chunks of debris. For a second I thought were part of the plane. When I think

back on it, they could be part of the building too, because it was all aluminum.

There was scaffolding. We were walking under scaffolding until we got to West Street. Once we got on West Street, we got under the bridge that crosses West Street, and we waited to get in. The lieutenant got in first. That's all I know.

I was looking up, making sure all the stuff falling down wasn't going to hit me before I ran in. I didn't see anybody jumping from the south tower, but I saw things coming out of the north tower, which I don't know what it was. It was falling straight down. I just knew it wasn't going to hit me.

As soon as I saw a big piece of like aluminum hit the ground, I didn't see anything else I just ran into the building. I just walked as fast as I could underneath the overpass to the Marriott.

Now I'm in the Marriott. There was two guys, I guess they were managers or something in the restaurant, running around. I grabbed one of them. They got us water. I asked them if I

could get some water, and they did. They came out with water, like glass bottles of water and a big jug of water.

There were a bunch of units inside the hotel. I only knew two of them. I knew 22 Truck. I saw them because I'm assigned to 220. I knew 22 Truck from uptown because when I was on rotation I spent a year in 76 Engine and they're with 22 Truck. I knew a couple guys there, but I just said hi to them. I just waved to acknowledge them because everything was so crazy.

After like five minutes -- it seemed we were there for a little while. We finally went -- we were inside the hotel, and we went north inside the lobby of the hotel. Somehow indoors we got from the hotel into the lobby of the north tower. We didn't miss a beat. We walked straight from the hotel into the lobby and straight through the revolving doors. They were like pushed open so you didn't have to revolve around, you could just walk straight through.

So we walked in there, and there were a bunch of civilians. I don't know where they were coming from, but they were coming and walking the

same way we were walking. The sprinkler systems were going, and everything was wet, the sprinkler systems worked fine, the big system.

We just kept walking in that corridor, the mall corridor, until we got almost to like an intersection in the mall corridor. We were in the corridor running west to east. That's the way we were walking, west to east.

Right before we got to a corridor running south to north is where we stopped. Lieutenant Brosnan said, "Let me go see if we can find a way up." We were supposed to go to the 74th floor or something like that.

We waited there right on the corner of the mall, right on the corner where the two sections met, the two mall sections. We were on the north corner of that. That's when 30 seconds after the lieutenant left you could hear the noise.

I was looking down towards West Street, because that's where it seemed that it was coming from. You just heard -- I thought it was a third plane that hit, because when we were going in there was a couple of cops. When we made the

right onto Liberty, they said, "Be careful, guys, there's a third plane heading in." So that's what I thought it was.

It just seemed like a long time that it was -- it didn't seem like an explosion. It was like boom, boom, and then just got louder and louder. It got louder and louder, and then all of a sudden I was looking out onto West Street and the whole area turned from gray to black in a hurry.

All the debris just pushed through all those doors, and all the people were falling down. The wind was just -- you could see it coming. People were screaming and falling down. Before the lights got totally black, I ran east a couple feet and made the left and ducked into that first store, not in the store but in a little niche where the display window was and where the corner -- what do you call it? Where the corner of the store was, where the west to east and the south to north corridors met. So it was that corner store.

For some reason there was like a foot -- you could go in about a foot before the

glass, and I just curled into a ball and just waited for everything to stop.

Then it stopped. Then I got up and it was pitch-black. I turned on my flashlight. Everybody else turned on their flashlights. We were all right around each other. We couldn't have been within ten feet of each other. We were all right there. We were all on the ground.

We got up and we organized. Then we just started looking for somebody. I think we started looking for -- we just started saying, "Does anybody know how to get out of here," or something like that. I forget what words we used.

We found a guy, a maintenance guy, with a flashlight. I'm familiar with the corridors over there because I take the train in three days a week. But I don't get out on the north side; I always get out on the Liberty Street side, because I go to school on Cortlandt. So I knew there were exits on both ends, but I never get out on the north side.

Anyway, we found this guy. We grabbed him. We put him in front of us. We had our

flashlights. I remember him saying if you find the Duane Reade, there's an exit by the Duane Reade. We never found the Duane Reade, but we were walking.

People were grabbing onto us. We were picking up people, because they were still -- after it was black, there was screaming in the beginning and we were shouting. We were saying "Don't worry, we're with the Fire Department. Everybody is going to get out." I remember saying stuff like that, which is pretty wild, actually. We were just as scared as anybody else. We were just victims too.

Basically the only difference between us and the victims is we had flashlights. It was hard to breathe, but you knew you could breathe. The first thing I did was grab my mask. I put it on, and then I realized that you could breathe without it. It was very, very dusty in there. You couldn't see with the flashlight in the beginning more than three or four feet. But you could see everybody's flashlight because they would glow in the beginning. Then it gradually settled down.

We started walking north. I remember seeing big columns. We walked past big columns. We ran into a store -- I don't know how far we were, maybe 60, maybe 100 yards, and we ran into a watch store. That's what I remember seeing, watches. It might have been a jewelry store or whatever. The guy said, "Oh, this is the watch store. I know where this is." He said, "The exit's this way. Keep going straight."

We went straight, and we ran into a -- what it was was a stairwell and like a wall. One said handicap exit. The maintenance guy, I was talking to him. He said, "The exit's right up here." There was a little confusion. Somebody else in the crowd said, "The exit's that way." What it was was there were two exits.

Me and Eric Bernstein went up to the one on Vesey Street. It was still black, and you couldn't see. When we found the doors, we opened them up and we knew it was outside. When you got out there and you opened the doors, you could see it was like it's nighttime but you know you're outside.

We took a bunch of guys out with us.

We went back down. The other guys were going the other way, which was another way. They were going to some kind of exit that came out on Church Street. Either way, we all got rid of people on both exits.

After that it started clearing up a little bit. A couple other rescuers started coming. I don't know who they were. I remember one guy saying 30 stories of the south tower collapsed. Maybe that's what it looked like. That was the first time I realized it wasn't a second plane that hit.

Some other guys were coming down, like rescuers. They were coming down. Somehow they went back in. I don't know who. We wound up saying we've got to go back in and see if there's anybody else there. We were basically looking for our lieutenant who was lost. We said we've got to go back in and do a search.

We went back in. I don't know how we hooked up with these guys again. Maybe they came back down to see the way they brought the guys out. But we hooked up with them. A couple of other rescue guys came in. I was standing at the

top of the PATH train looking down at that long stairwell and saying to myself I don't even know if I should go down there because it's so deep down there.

I've been down there a few times. My brother takes the PATH train. I met him in the bars. There's bars down at the lower levels. I started getting nervous. I started thinking that we shouldn't be here.

A couple of guys came in and went down. I don't know they were, guys in white shirts. They were some kind of rescue people. I don't know if they were Port Authority or whoever they were. They walked down. I was like, guys, I don't know if it's the best thing to do to go down there. They were like, "We're going down."

So I went with them. They went down there, and I stood by the stairs, at the bottom of the stairs. When they came back I said, "Did you find anybody? Do you need any help?" They said no. They didn't find anybody. They were leaving the place, and I boogied up the stairs, because I was getting spooked down there.

I got back upstairs, and I ran into

Eric again. He had found a line. He had found a hose line. At this point you could see there was a collapse. Everything got a bit lighter because wherever we exited was glowing, so we knew the exit was there. There was a blue glow, almost like a fluorescent glow. You could see down the corridor.

Right where we were almost when the first building collapsed, there was a huge collapse, a big wall of stuff, and it was on fire. Eric found a house line, and he grabbed the house line and he was saying, "Let's pull it." We pulled it over, and we got caught up on some stuff, he came back, helped me pull it out. I went to turn the wheel of the gauge and there was no pressure. There was water in it, but you could squeeze it closed.

About that time, that's when somebody said that there's a body -- "I've got somebody over here." That was close to where the collapse was, past the Coach store. That's where the house line came out; it was close to the Coach store.

By the time I got over there, there

were three guys putting him in a chair. There were FBI guys down there at this point. They had come down, and they had told us -- they might have been down there for like five minutes. I'm not sure exactly when they said this, but they came in and they said, "It's your show, guys. You just tell us what to do." That's what I remember.

There was least three, maybe four of them. I remember telling them, "The only thing you can do right now" -- they all had flashlights -- "is to stand like 50 feet apart towards the stairwell with the flashlights," because it was starting to bank down because of the smoke. The dust had cleared a lot, but the smoke was starting to bank down again and I was getting really nervous.

These guys picked the guy up in the chair, and they started walking with him. His head was flopping all over the place, so I grabbed his head. It was a long walk. It was at least 100 yards -- it seemed that way, because it was black -- to the stairwell. So we switched up. I switched and grabbed one of the legs. One

of the FBI guys was helping us. We got him up the stairs. We got him out on Vesey Street.

We couldn't have walked more than like 15 steps when the second tower came down. Everybody just ran for their lives. Really that's exactly what happened. All of a sudden there was blue out and then it just got a shade darker and the noise and then it got darker and darker and darker. The noise was getting louder, and there was stuff falling.

Eric and Vinnie ran out into the street, and me, Danny Walker and Joe Galasso ran back towards building number five, where we came from. We tried to get in the building. I'm not sure if Danny Walker got in the building and was able to stay in there.

I stepped in about two steps and I tried to push myself in, and the wind pressure from the falling building pushed me, knocked me off my feet backwards. I wound up in the street. I didn't even know it was the street at the time. It was actually a good thing, because I wound up under the overhang.

Then everything stopped. We got up. I

guess we were shocked. I didn't know if we were outside or inside. You couldn't see a thing. You couldn't really breathe without your mask. I guess you would have lived. But I don't know if you would have been able to maintain your consciousness.

There was mud in my mouth about a quarter of an inch thick. I just pulled it out in my hand, and I swallowed a whole bunch of it. I put my mask on. There was more dirt in the mask that blew into my face.

We regrouped. We were right around each other, me, Joe and Danny Walker. We couldn't move. The first time I knew I was outside was when I basically almost ran into one of the flowerpots out there on Vesey Street. You could barely move, for at least five minutes. You couldn't move because you didn't know where you were, what you were stepping on, where you were going.

Then you could see little fires, like paper fires. Then I saw the lights of a rig on Vesey Street that were blinking, the bottom lights. I knew that was the street. We walked

towards that. I thought the best thing to do was to head west into the wind so that we could get out of the smoke.

(Interruption.)

A. You could feel the wind blowing. You knew which way it was blowing. You just wanted to get out of this stuff. Plus I was really nervous about these fires on the ground. The ground was covered with papers and all sorts of debris. There were a few cars on fire.

We walked west. We could see the outdoor escalators at that point. We walked that way. We ran into like a building. I guess there's a building there, right there on West Broadway -- or there was a building there on West Broadway and Vesey that cut off the street so you couldn't go straight through. I remember running into something. We made a right, and we walked straight up West Broadway.

I remember just walking up that block. That first block, all the cars were on fire. They weren't totally engulfed in flames, but there was fire on them and their tires were exploding. I just remember how quiet it was

walking up that block. Everything was quiet except for the explosions of tires and stuff like that.

Eventually like a couple blocks later we got out of it and made our way to 7 Engine. That's pretty much it.

Q. Okay, Jim. That's good.

CHIEF KING: The time is 1717 hours, and this view is concluded.

File No. 9110327

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CHRISTOPHER PATRICK MURRAY

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

C. MURRAY

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is December 12, 2001. The time is now 1343 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Fireman Christopher Murray of Engine 205. We're at the quarters of Engine 207 at this time. There is nobody else in the room. The interview concerns the events of September 11, 2001, and what follows is the interview.

Q. Just talk at normal tones so that it picks you up.

A. I guess it was about 8:50. A passerby stopped in quarters, told us that the first plane just hit the north tower. Personally, I happened to be the person to take that verbal from the passerby. I walked out in the street and you could see the north tower right down Middagh Street. You could see the billowing smoke. I went back into the firehouse, told the guys to put on the news. Us being where we were, everybody knew -- we felt we were going to get assigned. Roughly, I would say, it was three minutes max, Engine 205 got assigned to the Trade Center.

We went over the Brooklyn Bridge, came down I believe it was Broadway and stopped the rig on Broadway and Liberty. At the same time, the second plane hit.

C. MURRAY

So when we were stepping off the rig, we heard the explosion and we looked up and we saw what everybody else saw, a big ball of fire, smoke, flame debris, building debris.

We got off the rig, grabbed the roll-ups, and our boss, thankfully, decided that it was not a safe place for us to be. We moved the rig. We went down a little south and came up on Church Street and I believe that would be Greenwich or Trinity rather. It looks like Trinity. I believe it would probably be Trinity and maybe Cedar.

Q. Okay.

A. No. Sorry. I guess maybe Trinity and Thames. Right by the Burger King, across the street, actually, by the church, by Trinity Church there. We grabbed our roll-ups. We walked over to the command post on West Street, on West and Liberty, and we spoke to Chief Barbara.

Q. So you walked about three blocks over?

A. Yes, we walked.

Q. You walked past the whole Trade Center complex?

A. Right. I think the only time we actually traveled on Liberty Street, and I'm not sure because I

C. MURRAY

don't know if we came behind 130 Liberty and came up Washington to Cedar, but I know we wound upcoming behind Washington or down Washington over to Cedar to West Street.

Q. Okay.

A. At this time Chief Barbara was right by the footbridge.

Q. South footbridge?

A. Yes, the south footbridge.

Q. Okay.

A. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED], the Chief

told us to stand fast, which we did for, I guess, well, it seemed like an hour, but more than likely it was five or ten minutes.

At this time we witnessed a lot of jumpers, a lot of debris falling off of the building. I don't know if you want to talk about Danny Suhr because we eventually got involved with Danny Suhr.

Q. Who is that?

A. He's another fireman. I think he's from 216, but I'm not sure. Danny Suhr, it's rumored he got hit by a jumper.

C. MURRAY

Q. You tell me everything. This will help us.

A. Standing on West Street across from Liberty, watching the jumpers, we saw a jumper come off the south side of the south tower, which would be the side facing Liberty Street, say on the cross street, a good distance to the southeast corner of this parking lot, which would actually be the northwest corner of Cedar and Washington, which is where Danny Suhr and his company, which, again, I believe, was 216, they were forming up to make their way to the towers. Danny Suhr got struck. Approximately a half a minute to a minute later, we came upon the scene, stopped to help Danny Suhr, dropped our roll-ups, grabbed a bunch of EMTs. There were other companies there. The companies I remember, I think, were 122. Somebody said 217, but I don't remember seeing them, which, again, it doesn't mean they weren't there. There were probably about 20 firemen trying to help Danny.

We were there for about five minutes. We helped Danny get loaded into the bus, went back, reformed, grabbed our roll-ups, put our Scotts back on, started walking north on Washington Street. At this time we were -- actually, it might have been in front of 90 West. I think we were in front of 90 West and we

C. MURRAY

were going to start walking north on Washington. Our Lieutenant decided that the safer way to go would be to go down to Albany, over to Greenwich, down into the Rector Street train station, which is on Greenwich and Rector Street, and try to come up to 4 World Trade through the tunnel.

Q. Through the tunnel.

A. Through the tunnel. We made our way south from where we were, which was Cedar and Washington, south on Washington, behind 130 Liberty Street. As soon as we got behind 130 Liberty Street, the building came down. So it's us, 122 I know was there, I believe the remainder of 216, minus Danny Suhr, if that is his company. It could be 219 for all I know. We were all there. We formed up in the basement on the back side of that building to regroup after the collapse to avoid all the stuff you see on the news, the cloud of dust, the pitch black, the debris, everything else. Our boss took a role call. All our members were accounted for.

At this time we exited the building back onto Greenwich Street and Albany. Realizing that there was really no way to go north at this point, we started heading south and we started searching the storefronts, vehicles, for other civilians in need of aid, and I

C. MURRAY

believe we got as far as possibly, if there's an address here, which I don't think there is, opposite -- I think we were in this building opposite 19 Rector Street. We went in there again to reform, try to get some water to clean out our eyes, regroup, make sure everybody is all right. We didn't aid civilians in any way except probably gave them a direction to go, which was south, go to the ferry, go south. Probably we were in there for five to ten minutes max. Our Lieutenant now wanted to go find our chauffeur, who at the time we thought was missing, so we started going back north.

Going back north, we heard the other building coming down. Almost as soon as we left the building we were in, the other building came down. A cloud of dust ensued. We kind of went back into the next building we came upon to let the dust settle. Me and another firefighter, George Clancy, with the -- I don't want to say recommendation -- at the request of a civilian searched the two lower floors of this building looking for a school that was rumored to have 20 or 30 kids in it. We didn't get any access. We assumed that the school had been evacuated.

We left there, walked back up, and we saw our boss, who had spoken to the other guys in our

C. MURRAY

company now who had come on their own. They had given us word on our chauffeur, that he was taken to the hospital. The other guys that were there, frantic calls on the radio trying to get in touch with anybody, and at this time we still had no idea what the magnitude of this was. We managed to get most of our guys that we knew were there.

Prior to all of that, prior to leaving West Street, I remember 118's report that they were on the 15th floor. I don't know which building. I don't think they gave a building. I think it was just to the battalion who sent them into the World Trade Center, and they said 118 is on the 15th floor working our way up. Then, when the buildings came down, we realized that we lost probably all of the truck.

We went back over to West Street after the second collapse and started stretching 3-1/2 hose to marine, which was down in the pier area over here. I guess that would be Gateway Plaza.

Q. Right.

A. Or maybe north. No, I guess it would have to be. Because most of the stuff that we did, we stretched down Albany probably, so I would have to assume that they were down here.

C. MURRAY

After doing that, we got assigned to 90 West Street or the building south of that, which I think was 70 West Street, because 90 West Street was burning, pretty much fully involved. I would assume that this was -- I'm just guessing -- just guessing, I would say somewhere in the neighborhood of about 11:00, 11:30. We entered 70 West Street, went up to the 37th floor, set up a Stang, and spent the remainder of the afternoon until about 9:00 o'clock at night in a hotel room on the 37th floor putting water on 90 West Street.

Q. Is that right?

A. Yeah. Then about 9:00 o'clock at night, the Chiefs asked that anybody who was working for more than 24 hours, which at this time was half of 205, plus the chauffeur, I believe, we were released. They told us you've been released, report back in the morning. Then we went down in the street and, you know, you do your own private search looking for people that you know, guys you've seen. Guys that I saw over here on West Street that I know personally were Arthur Barry from 15 Ladder, 15 and 4 down on South Street.

Q. From 15 and 4?

A. Yes, 15 and 4. He was down there. He was at

C. MURRAY

quarters that morning. He went up there, I believe. Actually, I'm certain. He was listed as missing. He was also on West Street. I saw 101 come up with their rig. I saw 202 and 224, I think, also come up with their rigs, and this is all before we left. So a lot of these companies were at the command post on the west side.

Q. The command post you said was still somewhere near that side footbridge?

A. Yes. Well, they didn't have an official command post set up. They had a Chief that was sort of forming a command post. He didn't have the boards out, the command post that we know where you have the boards and Field Com.

Q. Right.

A. He had, I guess, a group of companies asking him which way do we go, where do we go, where do you want us? So whether he was setting it up at the time or the other Chiefs wanted him to stay and they were up by the north bridge at the command post, maybe they told him to go down there and accept companies. I have no idea. That's speculation. But that's where Chief Barbara was and that's basically the end of the day.

Q. Was there any order to switch handy-talkie

C. MURRAY

frequencies? I'm just thinking, how did they -- when they knew they had two buildings, they couldn't even do one building reasonably on channel 1.

A. I don't know. I didn't have a radio.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. The message that I heard, the report that I heard from 118, I mean, you're used to hearing company numbers, you hear it and for whatever reason it just stands out over all the other reports. That one I heard, and then you heard the Maydays, you heard all the Maydays.

Q. After the first building came down?

A. Yes.

Q. On the handy-talkie, there were a lot of Maydays?

A. A lot of Maydays, a lot of people -- well, it was basically just back up, back up, back up, and that's pretty much what I remember of the whole day.

Q. Were any orders given to like, hey, let's go on the pile. I mean, once the smoke cleared and --

A. I don't know.

Q. You didn't hear that?

A. No, I don't know, because we were in the hotel all day. So halfway through the day or a couple

C. MURRAY

hours through the day, we actually lost our radios. Our radios went dead. It's probably more than half of the day. Probably about 4:00 o'clock, 5:00 o'clock, our radios went dead, because we heard reports all day long of 7 World Trade possibly coming down and I think at 5:30 that came down.

Q. Right.

A. So we heard that all day long, all the warnings. But as far as the other directions that people were giving or getting, everything was garbled. You had a lot of transmissions, people stepping on everybody, a lot of Maydays, a lot of confusion. I mean, nothing but confusion.

Personally, and this is an opinion, I don't think there was anybody there that would have given anybody an order to go dig. But that's just my personal opinion. Hearing some of the transmissions that they sent that they put on CNN, you could pick up transmissions, if you were able, evacuate the area, if you're able. But as far as individual orders over the radio to individual companies, a direct order to individual companies, I didn't hear any of that or I couldn't make any of that out if there was. Like I said, the radios were a ball of confusion.

C. MURRAY

Q. Most of the time, huh?

A. Yes. I mean, all day.

Q. All day.

A. All day. All you heard was Maydays, and whether it was from members in the building, I'd like to believe that it wasn't, because that's going to be a horrible thought for anybody that there were guys in there that survived the collapse. That's just kind of sad. There would be no rescue. So I'd like to believe that all the Maydays were from people out in the street trying to get the attention. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

This is before the collapse. Actually, afterwards everybody pitched in. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I think all the firemen were looking up.

Q. The firemen that got hit from earlier on in the story, he wasn't alive? They were giving him first aid. Was he conscious at any point?

A. No, he wasn't conscious. Whether or not he

C. MURRAY

still had any vitals we couldn't ascertain, but his company was working on him, so they were giving him rescue breathing if they resuscitate him or the bag, the BVM rather. But we didn't try to ascertain vitals. We just tried to load him up on the stretcher and get the EMTs to get a bus and get him out.

Q. I have a question for you. The building you were in, now, you lobbed water all day onto 90 West.

A. Yes.

Q. 90 West was largely involved in fire from the collapse?

A. Yes. I believe it started early on. There were a lot of car fires from the debris that was coming down, so I believe that maybe some of the debris from the first plane that hit the north tower traveled into that building and started the fire. I know there was a pretty good fire condition on the first floor. You could see it through the doors and the windows and then through the rest of the day. I don't know the condition of the building. It looked like they were work on it because they had the scaffolding set up.

Q. Right, yes, there was work.

A. So I assume that the interior condition of the building was not really in that good shape because

C. MURRAY

the fire traveled to the upper floors pretty fast, unless that whole side of the building was affected by the plane debris, which is probably a safer assumption.

Q. From where you operated from lobbing water all day, were there any other companies with you or in that area? Do you remember seeing any other companies?

A. Yes, there were companies. There were a lot of vollie companies, I think, coming up, trying to find out if they could help, and there really wasn't a lot for anybody to do other than relieve a company that was already there. But a lot of vollie companies were coming up. I know they had at least two hand lines operating and another Stang out of 70 West, out of the hotel, which I think is the Marriott Hotel, of course, the problem being we had very limited water.

Q. Right. Water was a problem all day.

A. Right. That building, 70 West, we were hitting that in waves. We'd shut down the upper floors and use the hand lines on the lower floors, then we'd shut down that floor and use a Stang in the middle floors, and then shut down that and use the Stang for more floors. I think they had I don't know if it was a hand line or another Stang up on the roof trying to shoot it into the top of the building. But limited

C. MURRAY

water, so it was kind of a --

Q. Not a good way to put out a high-rise building fire.

A. No. Definitely not. Very tedious process. The winds kicked up and it looked like we were going to lose that building as well. Thankfully, the winds died down and we got control of it. When we left, it wasn't extinguished but it was on its way. I wouldn't even say it was under control, but it looked like it wouldn't be that much longer.

That's about it. That's all I know.

Q. What impression did you get when the south tower fell down and this cloud of dust was enveloping you? Did you have a sense that most of the building collapsed or did you have a sense of what was --

A. Early on, looking at the buildings, my personal belief, my personal immediate belief was that the top of the building was going to slide off of the south tower because damage that the plane did, it looked like it took out half the building on a number of floors, on multiple floors. But it was a fleeting thought. I don't think anybody there believed in their heart that that building was going to collapse, even that the top would come off. But I don't think anybody

C. MURRAY

believed that that building was going to collapse the way it did.

But when it did start coming down, you knew exactly what it was. A couple of guys thought it was another plane because we heard reports of another plane coming in, and then you heard this noise and a few guys said it's another plane. But for whatever reason, I knew exactly what it was. It sounded like a freight train going right over your head. It was an unbelievable experience. Then, when the second one went, obviously, you heard the same noise, so you knew what that was.

Q. At any time did anybody -- I'm not being critical or anything like that. Did you ever hear of anybody trying to get a handle, like on a roll call, who's left? Was the handy-talkie at any time clear enough? How about orders assigning companies to do certain things? Anything like that?

A. No.

Q. It was just chaotic on the radios?

A. Everybody was screaming. We knew we had guys down there that came on their own, and if you're standing next to somebody with a radio, a couple of us had radios and we hooked up with the other guys from a

C. MURRAY

company that came on their own, so you're trying to break in whenever you can. We heard one of our guys breaking in looking for another guy on the truck and we had just run into him. We all kind of converged on the same corner. It probably took us at least a minute to get our message out that we got him and he's with us. Then we all hammered again three blocks north, which, again, was north and I would assume it had to be Trinity, like right in front of the American Stock Exchange, just north of the American Stock Exchange, we happened to run into a couple other guys, and then we went all over to West Street, where we regrouped with off-duty members and on-duty members.

Q. How did you get away from the scene? You said before something about 9:00 o'clock at night you operated until around?

A. Yes. I think at 9:00 o'clock at night, again, a lot of this is personal belief, I think some of the Chiefs started to realize that you really had a lot of people down there and a lot of people that were not going to be that effective in the job that needed to be done. You could have 10,000 guys down there and endangering these 10,000 guys needlessly there for the work that 2,000 guys are going to be doing. Plus you

C. MURRAY

had guys that were tired, you had guys that were beat up, you had guys that were hurt.

Not to say that not every single one of us was not dedicated. We were all dedicated. We all wanted to go in there and dig and help to get these guys out. But there was a lot of guys, I think, that were just incapable of doing that, and I think a lot of the Chiefs realized that. So the guys that were there for more than 24 hours, which I'm sure was a lot of guys, they released them. Whether everybody left or not, I don't know. But our company left. We were physically and emotionally beat up and spent.

Q. Okay. Sad story.

A. Yes. There's a lot of them out there.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: I want to thank Fireman Murray for his interview. This concludes the interview at 1406 hours and that's all.

File No. 9110329

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEVE FERRIOLO

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: The date is December 12, 2001. It's 1417 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the safety battalion.

I am conducting an interview with Firefighter 1st Grade Steve Ferriolo, Engine 207. We are at the quarters of 207. There is nobody else in the room.

Q. The interview begins right now.

A. On the morning of September 11, we responded to the trade tower at approximately -- oh, it was just before the second plane hit, because I noticed as we were going over the Manhattan Bridge both towers were burning.

We arrived over on West Street, just south of Liberty Street a little after nine o'clock. At that time, the members and the officer grabbed their roll-ups, the standpipe kit, and reported in to the command post. That was the last time I saw them.

That's basically it. I don't know what they were assigned to do. A few hours after that, I went around looking for them. I came upon two different command posts. They had no knowledge that 207 was there.

I found out there was a third command post

Ferriolo

that got -- was caught in the collapse, so they probably reported in to that one. The two that I did find did not know that they were even there.

Q. Where were the two that you did find?

A. Might have been on Broadway. One was here on Broadway.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: He's looking at the map. He's looking at Broadway and John Street.

Q. Dey Street or John Street, that's the first one?

A. Yeah, around there. The other one was over here on West.

Q. On West Street near the north walk bridge?

A. West Street, right, West.

Q. You checked those two out, and then there was a third one?

A. When I went to the second one, they told me that there was a third one that got caught in the collapse. So they probably reported in to that one. Like I said, I don't know what their assignment was, which tower they were assigned to go into.

Q. Okay.

A. This was later on in the day, like two o'clock in the afternoon.

Ferriolo

Q. What did you wind up doing with the pumper?
Did you hook up or you just stood where you were?

A. Well, when we first arrived, I hooked up as they were bringing in their roll -- you know, they took their roll-ups, their equipment, and they went to report in to the command post. I was hooking up on West Street just south of Liberty.

Q. West and Liberty, good.

A. Like I said, that was the last time I saw those guys.

Later on during the day, we moved the pumper onto Liberty, and we would be relayed water by the marine unit. We set up our manifold, and there were units taking water off our manifold during the day, and that's where it stayed for a few days after that.

Q. Your manifold -- what is a manifold?

A. The satellite.

Q. Oh, the satellite, okay.

A. We had the satellite with us.

Q. Perfect, okay.

How was the water pressure? Well, from the marine company, it was good.

A. Marine yeah.

Q. Marine is good.

Ferriolo

A. After the second tower fell, we lost all hydrant water in the area.

Q. Right.

A. So then we had to bring in marine to pump in whatever 3 1/2 lines we had coming in off the marine boats. That was the only water supply we had.

Q. Did you stay in that area pumping and so forth until late in the day?

A. Mid afternoon I started walking around looking for them. I did the whole perimeter. It was three, four, five o'clock in the afternoon. I came to realize that -- you know, that they weren't around.

Q. How did you get home from the scene? What time did you leave?

A. About eleven o'clock at night. I left the pumper with a fireman that came in from Staten Island. He was manning the pumps. I came back, and I caught a ride with one of the other firemen that came in from home in his truck.

Q. Do you remember hearing any specific things on the handie-talkie? I know Channel 1 was crazy.

Do you remember any orders? Anything specific? Anything unusual?

A. After the second tower collapsed, there was a

Ferriolo

lot of Maydays, casual Maydays. No, nothing out of the ordinary.

Q. Do you remember hearing anything before the tower -- were you guys there before the towers collapsed?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember hearing any specific orders to companies? Go here, do that, anything like that?

A. No, no.

Q. Do you remember --

A. Not that I can remember. I'm sure there was.

Q. Yes.

Do you remember now -- can you place any other companies where they were operating?

Can you place any members, friends of yours, other firemen?

A. No, like I said, because the towers are -- our rig was two or three blocks away.

Q. Okay.

A. That's where I stayed.

Q. Yes.

A. I don't know even where the command post was, who they reported in to, and what they were assigned to

Ferriolo

do. I visually couldn't see where they went.

I don't even know where that command post was. I would imagine it was near the towers.

Q. Yes. That's about it?

A. Yeah.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: This concludes the interview with Fireman Ferriolo of Engine 207.

The time is now 1423 hours, and I thank you again for the interview.

File No. 9110330

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEVE PICCERILL

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: The date is 12/12/01. The time is 1511 hours.

This is Chief Malkin of the safety battalion of the New York City Fire Department.

I'm conducting an interview with fireman Steve Piccerill of Engine 204. We are in the quarters of Engine 224.

There is nobody else in the office, but the two of us, and what follows is the interview.

THE WITNESS: Okay. Got to work a little late that day, about maybe about quarter to nine with the traffic.

I walked in the firehouse, and the guy says a plane hit the trade center. I thought it was a little plane. Anyway, I go running upstairs, get changed, because I know on the third alarm we're going to go.

So I came downstairs, New York 1 had it on TV, and we were watching it, and we are saying wow, looks like a pretty good job, you know.

With that, we get the run to respond, but they tell us not to respond immediately to the trade center. They kept us on Hamilton Avenue and Rapelye Street. So we went down there, and we

Piccerill

were actually buffing the job. You know, we were looking at it and saying wow, that's some job.

All of a sudden, I turned away, and I heard a tremendous explosion, and I turned around. That was the second plane hitting the trade center, so that's when they told us to respond.

Meanwhile we thought the tunnel was clear at that time for emergency traffic. When we got in the tunnel, it wasn't clear. It was -- we were stuck in there for maybe ten minutes. I don't know. That's when I started to get a little nervous, because I was afraid that someone in the cars just, you know, figuring in the tunnel, this would be a place to hit also.

We finally got out of the tunnel. We were driving out of the tunnel up West Street, and we're seeing body parts in the street, torsos, chunks of flesh, parts of the airplane, landing gear, car fires everywhere. It was like a war zone.

I had the nozzle, so I had the window right there, and I'm looking up at these two towers saying, how are you going to put this thing out, let alone anything else.

Piccerill

So we got out of our rig. We stopped on West Street some place, and we got out of the rig, and there was a chief -- I don't know who it was, but he told us to wait by this underground parking garage in the staging area.

So we all got off the rig, and we were just standing. He told us to take our turnout coats off, our helmets and our tanks, because he said we're probably going to be here for a little while. He didn't want us to heat up.

So we were all just kind of standing there looking at it, and a lot of stuff running through your mind at this time.

That's when the bodies started coming down, you know. I stopped counting after six, but I don't know how many bodies were coming down. We were waiting. I figured we were going to be going in the building soon, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I was walking back up to the front of the tunnel, and I heard like a -- to me, it sounded like thunder, and I just saw stuff coming down, and I heard someone. He said, "Run

Piccerill

for your life. The tower's falling."

I looked up, and I just saw this thing coming, and we all just ran, ran into the tunnel. We got in there, and I don't know how many guys were there. Maybe -- maybe 30 or 40 guys. I know 211 was there with us, 210. 224 was with us. Who else? That's all I can remember offhand. 221 was with us.

We were all kind of making our way through this underground garage, and now it's starting to get lousy from the smoke, and it's banking down, and we were trying to find our way out.

We found our way to a doorway in a stairwell, figuring we were going to get out, and the door was locked. Not one of us had any kind of forcible entry tools, so we just ran.

Now I'm saying, "Oh shit, now I'm going to -- I'm going to suffocate in here along with 40 other guys," and who comes flying up the stairs out of the smoke, this lonely janitor, saying, "I got a key for that door."

So bingo, the guy comes up fumbling for the keys, and he finally gets the door open, and we get out, and I was, like, wow, wow, we're out of

Piccerilli

that.

So when we got out, I'm not really sure where it was, Chief. We were in this -- maybe a courtyard or something adjacent to the first tower that was still on fire, and I'm looking up at that, and I'm looking at one our of our guys, Gary Z. He got hurt pretty bad at the time. He was sitting in the ambulance. Our lieutenant got hurt there, too. He was laying on the ground. So we packaged them all up, and we were getting into the ambulance, and I don't know if a guy said it over the bullhorn or a P.A. or something. I don't know. I know it was a loud voice.

He said, "The tower's leaning. Run for your lives." And I look up, and I see the tower coming our way, and I'm saying, that's it, Steve, you ain't -- you know, you know you're not going to outrun the freaking tower.

So we put them in the ambulance, and we just took off. We just ran for all we were worth, running and running, and I'm looking back and, you know, it's coming. So me and this guy Mike McKenna and two cops -- I don't know if they were Port Authority, regular cops -- all running

Piccerill

through this lot and we see a little -- maybe a security shack or some kind of shanty, a little building, maybe 10 by 10.

So I'm the first one to hit it. I dive behind it, and we all dived behind it, and we were just hunkering down. The stuff is hitting us, and it gets pitch black, and I can't breathe.

We were all just sucking the ground, and I figured the building -- the tower didn't get me, the other tower. I didn't suffocate. Now I'm going to die here in this shit.

We were just hunkering, praying, just waiting for something to happen, and finally it started to lighten up, and it got a little bit lighter. I said to Mike, "Mike, it's lightening up. Let's get the hell out of here."

And we got up. We still couldn't see good, but we were kind of like feeling our way. We found a fence. We found a hole in the fence. We just followed the wall until we finally got out into clean air, and right by the river, a little walkway. I think it's behind Stuyvesant School, a little walkway right by the river, and we came out there. I was hacking out stuff for ten minutes.

Piccerill

Then I just sat on the bench and was saying to myself, this really happened? It was really -- after that I was basically, I guess, shocked. I was just -- I was just standing there. I was just sitting there, just contemplating. That was really it.

I met up with the guys from 224, 202. I hung with them for a little while. Then we were just hanging out watching the Building 7 ready to go. That's where our captain had finally found us on a recall, because everyone thought we were dead, because our rig got destroyed.

That was it. The captain says, "You're going to the hospital." I said to the captain, "I'm okay." I said, "I'm alive, man."

He says, "No, you're going to the hospital, because you look like shit." He sent me and Eddie to the hospital, and that was it.

They checked us out -- x-rays, whatever -- and I finally made it back to my firehouse and

█ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BY CHIEF MALKIN:

Q. I don't blame you.

A. I just couldn't -- just for a couple of days it was -- it was like a videotape going on in your head from the time it happened to the time it ended.

Q. Unbelievable.

A. That's basically it. I came to work the next day. The captain says, "What the hell are you doing in work?" I said, "I don't know what to do, Captain.

This is -- I feel I should be here."

"[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

Q. How many guys from 204 were lost there?

A. None.

Q. None.

A. One guy, Gary Z, during all this just before the first tower went, which was the second building to get hit -- I didn't even know this, but the chief said he needed three more engines to go into the building,

Piccerill

so our lieutenant volunteered. I think it was 202, and I'm not sure. It could have been 221.

The lieutenant said to Z, "Listen, go back to the rig, get some gloves, because you might be doing a lot of nasty stuff. Get a search line and get a couple of spare Scotts."

So Z went back to the rig. He got his stuff and went to get a flashlight. He was walking from the rig, and he seen -- he heard the rumble. He seen guys running. He looked up, and the building was coming down. He was, like, should I dive under the rig or should I run with the rest of them?

He chose to run. That's what saved his life, because the rig got destroyed by all the debris and stuff, and he got thrown up against the wall, and he was hurt pretty -- he hurt his back, but he was a lucky man. I mean, we were all lucky, I thought, geez, but he was very lucky.

You know, we thought he was dead. We were in that underground garage. We did a head count, and he was missing, and everyone said he went back to the rig, and we knew that wasn't a good thing.

Q. Yes.

A. And when I -- like I said, we got out of that

Piccerill

garage finally, the underground parking garage. He was sitting in an ambulance all covered in blood in shock, like deer in the headlights type of shock, where he didn't have a clue where he was.

That's really it. The way I saw it anyway.

Q. All right. This is a map of the trade center. Put your glasses on.

A. We were just below Vesey Street, right below the atrium. I don't know if the atrium is on this --

Q. Like on West Street, on the west side of West Street?

A. Over here. Okay, I was right by the American Express building, so I think we were just below Vesey. Here is the Winter Garden. Here is where we were, I would say right around here somewhere.

Q. That's where you were sitting after the collapse? When were you there?

A. No, this was when we were watching the buildings burn. This is where the underground garage is, somewhere around here. There's the Winter Garden. We were right next it to, and when we pulled up off of West Street, the chief said, "Listen, stand by the underground garages." Somewhere around here. I'm not really sure.

Piccerill

Q. When Tower 2 was collapsing, the first one that went down, you ran down a ramp or something like that, and then you came up. The guy opened the door, and you came up into the street, you said?

A. We came up into a courtyard.

Q. Courtyard, so you were over -- on the west side some place?

A. I would assume so, chief. I'm not -- tell you the God's honest truth, I'm not really sure.

Q. You're not sure.

A. I'm not really sure.

Q. All right. When you met that chief, do you remember what rank he was? Do you know who he was?

A. No.

Q. Anything like that?

A. No, but I'll say one thing. He saved a lot of guys' lives by making us go to that place, because if he didn't, we wouldn't be here today.

Q. Yes, really.

So you ran in the tunnel when the first building came down?

A. Yes, with the first, this one.

Q. That's this one, the south building?

A. Yes.

Piccerill

Q. Then eventually you worked your way up. The smoke cleared and everything else.

Then where were you when the second one -- what were you doing when the second building came down?

A. Putting guys in the ambulance.

Q. Right.

A. Gary Z and our Lieutenant Healy.

Q. On West Street?

A. It was in the courtyard somewhere behind West Street. I don't know if it was this side. I tell you the truth, Chief, I really don't know.

Q. Okay.

A. I've gone back and tried to even piece it together and --

Q. You're not sure where you were?

A. I still can't find the exact spot.

Q. Okay.

A. I'm going to say just for the heck of it that it was probably somewhere around here.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: He's indicating north of Vesey Street and west of West Street in that square block.

Q. Do you remember this one coming down and where you were when the second building was coming

Piccerill

down?

A. Yeah. Like I said, we were in that -- we were in that lot somewhere.

Q. A lot?

A. I would assume maybe somewhere around here, but I really don't know, but I remember when we came up out of the underground parking garage and we got out, it led us right into that courtyard where Gary Z was, and Lieutenant Healy.

All I remember was looking up, and basically about like the same angle about -- the way I pictured it, I was almost directly in line with one of the corners of the building. I'd say around in that area, but I can't tell you for sure.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: He's indicating on the map the same location, just west of West Street, just north of Vesey Street.

He had somewhat of a view of Tower 1 coming down, the second building, when it came down.

Q. Anything else?

A. Not really. I went to the hospital.

Q. Which hospital did you go to?

A. I went to -- what is the one on -- Beth Israel on Second Avenue and 17th Street or something.

Piccerill

Q. Yes. Do you remember anybody there?

Can you identify anybody that was there with you?

A. Just me, and Eddie Rodriguez. He works in 204. That was the only two firemen at the time I seen them bringing in, because originally they were trying to get us to Brooklyn to a hospital, but they couldn't get over the bridge, so they took us over there.

It was probably the easiest one to get to at the time, because I have to tell you, traffic was insane. Everything was blocked off, and no one was going anywhere in a hurry.

Q. Yes.

A. That's really it.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: This concludes the interview.

It's now 1525 hours, and I thank the fireman for the interview.

That's the end. I'm going to shut it off now.

File No. 9110337

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ROBERT HUMPHREY

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: The date is December 13, 2001. The time is 1700 hours.

This is Battalion Chief Ronald H. Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Firefighter Robert Humphrey of Engine Company 4, firefighter 1st grade, of the City of New York Fire Department.

The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine Company 4 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Humphrey, would you please tell me in your own words what happened on September 11, 2001.

A. Well, we didn't get the run normally, because our computer was out, and the department phone was not working. So the first time we heard was when a Spanish gentleman was running down the block saying there was a big explosion at the World Trade Center, and then shortly after that over the voice alarm we heard, "Explosion in the World Trade Center. Stand by for assignments." Then we didn't hear nothing after that.

We figured we were going, so we took off, but before we went, there was a major traffic jam. Usually

Humphrey

we would have gone right out of quarters, but we went left and I took a little different position, but ended up putting me right where I needed to go.

It was backed up, so the guy said, "Don't go that way. Don't go that way." So I went left, and I saw there was traffic all the way through the tunnel, because usually we go under the battery tunnel and go around, so we went down through Fulton Street to Church to Vesey, and then when I parked at Vesey right under 5 and 1 World Trade across the street from 7 World Trade and West Broadway.

West Broadway leads into Vesey, and I was right against the building, where there's a subway entrance into down in the trade center. There was a hydrant right there, and I hooked up there. At that time, it was Captain Farrelly, and the rest of the guys got out of the rig, and I realized that we had another guy on the rig, and I didn't know at the time, because everybody jumped into the rig, and we had Richie Allen jumped into the rig, because he got relieved earlier. So we had an extra space, because we were a four-man engine company, so he came along.

So Richie. We had Charlie Anaya, Richie -- Jimmy Riches, Tommy Schoales, and Richie Allen and

Humphrey

Captain Farrelly took off toward West Street, and we waited at that part of the building.

After that, I was -- basically I wasn't watching. I just know which way they were going. I was busy hooking up to the Siamese, which was supposed to be supplying one end to the World Trade Center right over there, so I hooked up to the Siamese.

As I was waiting, then all of a sudden the second engine company pulled up right next to 7 World Trade Center, which is on West Broadway and Vesey, but they were right across. They were right next to it, directly to the east of 7 World Trade Center and across from the post office.

Then I helped him hook up, and then after that I think it was 21 engine, 21 or 22. I think it's 21, though. He hooked up a little further down on Vesey Street. Maybe it was 50 yards from the corner of West Broadway, and then we dragged hose all the way over to the Siamese. So we had one Siamese full, with two -- three halves hooked up, and another Siamese with one line hooked up. So we had three pumpers pushing water into the building.

At that point between actually -- probably before the third engine company came is when the second

Humphrey

plane hit, and I was in the middle of the street at the time, and it came -- the plane came from the south, so I saw very little of the plane. I only saw a flash going on the side of the building where the opening is, and then the explosion. That's when I took cover inside the rig, because everything was -- all the metal and stuff was coming down on the rig and in the streets, you know, stuff from the plane, and metal and whatever, and glass, and et cetera.

So I jumped into the rig until everything was -- it was safe to come out, you know, out of the building. Then I came out. At that point a couple of things happened, I guess before that.

It was -- somebody wanted to borrow my gear, so I told him, "No, because I'm going to probably need it." Usually as the chauffeur I'm wearing just the regular pants and stuff, because you're running around, and then right after that, I put all my gear on right away, because I knew this is not -- this is not your normal, everyday thing which is going on right now.

So I had all my bunker gear on. I put everything on, my helmet. The only thing I didn't have is a mask, because we didn't have an extra mask in the rig, and the extra guy that was in our rig took the

Humphrey

mask, so I had no mask, and I had no light, and -- but I did have my helmet and my coat and whatever. I just wore that for the rest of the tour.

I was working with 28, so I was talking to him a lot. Since we were kind of the closest, and -- well -- and then as time went by, saw a lot of people jumping off the building all different ways, and I couldn't -- from where I was, I can't see them land, luckily, because that would have been -- I ended up seeing it later when I went after the first collapse when I came back, but I seen about 15, 20 people jump from my angle, and I know there were a lot more, because on the south side they said they saw a lot of people jump.

I was on the north side of the building so that's what I saw, and there was no -- there were a lot of pedestrians around, cops trying to keep them back, but there were a lot of people looking at that point and then -- I remember now when it was -- when the building came down exactly.

Oh, I was in the middle of the street. What I did was after -- also after the second plane hit, I knew that I didn't want to get hit with any stuff, because I saw a lot of stuff come down, so I was

Humphrey

looking for a place I can duck my head under so I wouldn't get something landing on top of me, not that I thought the building was going to come down, but maybe pieces of the building.

So I saw there was like a delivery tunnel in the post office inside of West Broadway and Vesey. There were five cops there. They were hanging out there, so well, if anything happens, duck in. Thank God I did that, because all of a sudden when I was standing in the middle of the street, here comes the south tower, starts coming down.

Took off into the tunnel. We got blasted a little bit, but nobody got too much stuff on their head from that angle. We just got a blast, and the dust and everything else, and the cops had some flashlights, and there was one security guard in the building, and he basically knew where he was going even though he was taking us back out from where the blast was, taking us back to the west side.

So I told him, "Why are you taking us back where we were? Take us out towards Church Street, you know, towards the east side." So we went back, up and around, and we had to go up a flight of stairs, because we were in the basement and, we went out that way.

Humphrey

There was a guy they pulled in from Church Street that was hurt bad, and I was taking care of him, and nobody had -- there was no water. There was nothing, so I ended up taking him -- bringing him all the way to Broadway, got into an ambulance. First I got him cleaned up at a post, because I guess they set up posts right after the plane hit, and the first -- actually the first two planes, after the planes hit. They set up a post and a first-aid station.

I brought him over there, got his face cleaned up, and then I brought him to an ambulance, because everybody was getting out of there. They said it wasn't safe, so I took him to Broadway and got him into an ambulance. Then I went back toward the rig.

When I was on Church Street, I saw a lot of bodies laying all over the place. I was trying to help a couple of engine companies that were already operating, because I was by myself, obviously, at that point. Mostly dead. Some were alive. There was body parts a lot of places right in front of the building. I went down pretty far down towards Church, and then I was coming back, and then I saw my rig. Then I saw water shooting across the street in the opposite direction from the building, and I was -- and that's

Humphrey

what brought me back also, from helping other people too.

I was saying, "Who the hell turned -- pulled the gate?" I was saying, "Who the heck pulled it?" So I went down, and I wanted to see what was going on, if there was a malfunction or something, but somebody pulled the gate full blast and was shooting across the street.

So I shut that gate, turned the pressure back up so there was water in the building. I didn't know if anybody was actually using the water, but I just did what I was supposed to do at that point.

Then I saw a couple of guys from one truck, Rogers was one, and he had somebody else with him, and then he wanted to know where everybody went. I told him they went around West Street, and they took off by the rig, and they went up that way.

I went back across the street to 28 engine to find out how the chauffeur was doing.

Let me back up just a touch. I saw 21 engine, and it was really malfunctioning. It was going -- it was like really doing weird things, the engine. I don't know if it was pumping properly or not. It didn't sound like it, let's put it that way.

Humphrey

It was having failure, heart failure, and then I saw 28 show up, and then I went over to him, and the rig wasn't on, and he says to me, "My rig broke down." Probably with all the dust and everything might have clogged it up, whatever, because everybody was pumping before that happened.

So my rig was the only one pumping at that point. Then I asked him, "How did you get out?" He said, "I went back to the rig." I said, "That's -- I don't know about this one. This one's a lot closer to us than the other one." I says, "I don't know if I'd do that," but I says, "All right." We had some conversation, kind of looking up at the building, and it was no more than 30 seconds later that the other one came down, and I just yelled, "Come this way," and then he went the other way, and then I just took off into the tunnel, but this time there was a ton of stuff coming down, major stuff, and I was in the middle of the street, and I just like made -- I just made it through, because I felt the blast come right through, and even the cars in there were getting pushed out.

I jumped over this railing, and on the platform, and I just like laid there for a second while all the shit was coming by me, and everything just

Humphrey

stopped. All the stuff was covering the entrance where I was in. Later on, of course, we found that he was alright, but he did get blown back pretty good.

So I was stuck in there, and I had nobody in there. It was me. I had no light, nothing. It was pitch black. So I was trying to find my way out, and I was debating myself, you know, should I have gone back. I did, but it was kind of one of those things, you know, flip a coin, and -- well, I went a little forward.

I thought I knew -- I thought I knew where I was. You don't know until it's pitch black, because when I went forward, what I thought I knew, I ended up finding an elevator, and I felt in there. I felt the metal and the felt the cloth. This is not where I want to go, so I ended up having to back pedal, trying to go back where I came, just a little bit, and all I could feel was the heat and smoke coming in, so I just had to try to find a wall.

I found a wall, and I just stayed along the wall the whole time. It took me 20 minutes to a half an hour. I ended up getting my way out of the building, which is lucky. I don't know how I didn't hit any hitch somewhere or some dead end. I was on

Humphrey

Barclay and Church, I guess, Barclay and Church. I came out somewhere over there. I had a feeling I was coming towards something, because I started feeling a little breeze, and I felt the breeze coming in, because when I got deep into the building, in the basement, there was no more debris. It was just straight dust. There was no more garbage or no metal. I was just riding around.

So when I finally got around, I felt this little breeze, and I just kept going toward it, and then my eyes were half closed, because I really took a good blast on that, and I was just looking, and I saw it said "Barclay Street," and I said, "Shit, I'm out of here," and I just took off. I thought I was going in the right direction. I went towards Church and went a couple of blocks up, and then I saw -- the first real person I saw was somebody with a camera about a block and a half up. He was taking pictures of me coming out of there. Then the next fireman I saw, who gave me a lift back to the post, was Danny Lynch. He was riding around in a suburban, his own suburban. He's an old Manhattan trustee, and he drove me back to West Street so I could get accounted for.

Backtracking, Smigeons -- and I'll tell you,

Humphrey

when I was back inside the cellar, I was -- when I was running in, I looked behind me, and I saw somebody else run in. I know it wasn't the chauffeur from 28. It was somebody else. I actually stopped, and I called out. I yelled about three times, and nobody answered, so I don't know what happened to that person.

Then I used my radio, and I was calling -- I said, "Engine 4 chauffeur to 28 chauffeur." I had nothing on it. There was nobody calling anything, no Mayday or nothing. I called him. I got no answer. So that's when I started to move because I figured that was it. I'm on my own at that point. You know, I called several times. I said -- and I didn't know whether to call Mayday myself, because I really didn't know where the hell I was, but I figured I'd give it a shot. Maybe it was a mistake, I don't know, but until I felt like I was --- they said, if you feel like you're ready to go, then it's too late, but I can compose myself at that point.

Once I knew I was getting nervous, then I was going to call Mayday. Tell you the truth, I don't think anybody would have heard me, because nobody responded. I didn't hear anything on my radio, nothing. So, I mean, I don't know how good the

Humphrey

communications is in the basement over there, but I couldn't get out where I came from, because it was high enough where -- and I couldn't even see. All I know is this stuff blowing out, and I couldn't take the chance going the same way I came from, because I knew it was no good. During all the radio contact, the only thing I could say is when I talked to other people, they said that Engine 4 was with Engine 28 and Engine 7, and they were on the 30th Floor, and then they were making their way down all together.

They got down to the lobby, and I think the guy -- lieutenant from 28 said, "We're going to make a break for it." At that point, that's when everything -- you know, everything was coming down, I guess. They all went, I don't know which way, and 4 didn't get out, and 7 and 28 did.

I wasn't with them, so I don't know what direction anybody went, but as far as I know, they all got down to the lobby at that point. Then 7 and 28 got out and 4 didn't, so...

Q. Do you have anything else to add?

A. Let's hope it doesn't happen again.

Q. I have a couple of questions.

A. Sure.

Humphrey

Q. You said the second engine. Was that 21 engine?

A. No, no. Second engine got there, 28.

Q. 28, and then 21 came in?

A. Yes, I think it was 21.

Q. Those engines that you helped when you were coming back after you took the guy to Broadway, do you know --

A. You know what? It was -- I was doing EMS work. I was -- one guy was dead -- I didn't know he was dead. I was going on the ground when they ended up putting his jacket over his head. He was dead.

Q. Right.

A. And another one we were working on, he was doing CPR on him.

Q. So these are the companies? They weren't the pumpers?

A. No, this is companies.

Q. You don't remember any of there --

A. Because I came back from Broadway, because when I finally got out of building, and I was helping this guy, got all the way to Broadway. Then I didn't want to leave him hanging, so I got him over to Broadway, got him to an ambulance, and then I took off

Humphrey

back.

That's why it really wasn't a lot of time, so when I finally got back and talked to 28 engine, that's when the tower came down, so I didn't really have enough time to, you know. One sigh, and then the freaking building came down.

Q. Right. No, I meant, you said on the way --

A. Right. On the way back, I really don't know what companies I was working, but it wasn't anybody from 21, and it wasn't anybody from 28. It was a company that came in probably to help. Could have been both companies, could have been it -- I really don't -- I really don't even know.

Q. Okay.

A. All I know is I was just helping out, whatever I could do, and then I saw the rig, and then I went over to the rig.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Great. Thanks for your time. Thanks for the interview.

This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110338

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DAVID VITIELLO

Interview Date: December 13, 2001.

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

D. VITIELLO

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 13, 2001. The time is 4:47 p.m.

Q. This is Battalion Chief Robert Burns, New York City Fire Department, Safety Battalion, conducting an interview with --

A. David Vitiello, Firefighter David Vitiello.

Q. From Ladder 122, in regard to the events of September 11, 2001. If you would, Dave, in your own words, just tell us what happened on that day.

A. Okay. We saw the first plane hit. We didn't see the first plane hit. We saw the fire on the news in the morning. We didn't know if it was a plane at that time. Within five, ten minutes, we got the deal on where we are getting sent over. We still didn't know if it was terrorists or whatever. Ladder 122 responded, I think, on the second alarm.

We went to the staging area, which was on the Brooklyn side of the Battery Tunnel. There I remember seeing 132 behind us, Ladder 132 behind us. There was lots of units there. Within the commotion I think Ladder 132 was able to get in front of us. We were trying to move cars and what not.

Got through the bridge -- actually we saw the second plane hit from across the river. Then they sent

D. VITIELLO

every Brooklyn unit that was at the staging area to the World Trade. Got over to the other side of the tunnel, I wasn't really looking at units. I wasn't looking at companies. I was looking at what was going on around me. We pulled up past, I think, 132. We parked past the second -- first tower, the north tower, and then we started heading back towards the command post, which was directly across from tower one in the World Financial Center, the big black building.

We got there. I remember seeing Chief Ganci there. Who else was there. He was the only one I recognized. I can't remember any companies that were around me. Then Captain Metcalf who worked here, who survived, he worked here a few times, he gave us the orders to go into tower two, the south tower, and we went through on the pedestrian walk on Liberty Street and went into the corner door on Liberty and West, which was -- actually we were going into the Marriott, which I thought we were going into the tower, but I didn't know that building that well, but actually we were in the Marriott lobby.

Then I saw Engine 58, was right next to us, the Engine, I remember that. I heard from other guys that were there with me that Ladder 101 was in there.

D. VITIELLO

That they saw guys with patches from 101 and 132, as well, Ladder 105. I didn't notice any patches from any of those guys, but I know for sure 58 Engine was right next to us.

Then the building came down, there was a lot of commotion. I got out. Found me and another guy from -- Jerry Casey from Ladder 122, we came across a fireman underneath an ambulance, crushed. I don't know what company he was from, but he was right by the pedestrian walk on Liberty. Maybe, I don't know at that point where I saw a walk, pedestrian walk was there. Then I lost Jerry, who is in my company, I got blinded by some of the soot. He walked off and everybody was shell shocked and I lost track of him and then I was by myself. Couldn't tell which way was what. Trying to find the rig. I ended up -- I know for sure I went south on West Street, which was good, because within a few minutes, the second tower came down.

Actually I ran into Engine 228, which had just come over through the tunnel. I spoke to the officer. I think everybody survived. I found out everybody survived from that Engine, I think, from what I heard from people. He told me -- I asked him if he

D. VITIELLO

had seen my company, he said no. He said sit in the rig. I had a radio. I had the irons and he said sit in the rig. If they call for them -- if the command center calls for them, to call him and let him know where they wanted him to go. He said just sit in the rig and try to get your whereabouts. I said okay.

I sat in the rig and within -- they walked maybe like 20, 30 steps and the second tower started coming down. I jumped out of their rig and started running down West Street towards the tunnel. Some cop waved me into a city bus, I jumped inside there. There was like 5 or 6 firemen there. We all huddled on the ground when all the debris and smoke and everything hit the bus. Stood in there for like 20 minutes.

Then when the smoke cleared, we walked all the way down to the water. It was like a MERV command RV, Fire Department RV thing. Nobody was really in there. I signed my name there. They were taking names to make sure who was survived. I can't remember anybody's helmets that were in there. There was only like 3 guys in the whole thing. One guy working in and two or three other firemen besides me.

Then I came back to the site to find my guys. I walked around the water side, because you

D. VITIELLO

couldn't go down West Street any more because it was blocked from all the debris. I walked around the water side and I can't remember any helmets or any companies or anything.

Finally I heard my chauffeur talk to my officer asking him something and I just cut in on him and went over the air, Irons to 122. They said, "Oh Dave, you're alive," or whatever. I asked them their location. They told me where they were. Then something came over the radio. There was some gasoline underneath the ground and everybody should evacuate the area. I was stuck down by the waterfront. I had no place to go. I saw everybody running north on West Street and I was by the boats. There were boats leaving to go to Jersey.

But they kept calling for me to meet them by Chambers and West, so I tried to get over there. Finally got over there and they weren't there. They had gone north and I went north on West Street and I saw my chauffeur, saw his bright red hair. I went up and that's all I remember.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: All right. Great Dave. The time is 4:56 p.m. That concludes our interview.

File No. 9110339

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN QUINN

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

K. QUINN

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Today's date is December 13, 2001. The time is 1:28 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Firefighter Kevin Quinn, assigned to Engine 271.

Q. This is in regard to the events of September 11, 2001. If you would, Kevin, just tell us in your own words what happened on that day?

A. I was starting my second tour of a 24. We got the call to respond to, I believe it was Engine 6, to relocate to the World Trade Center. Came over the Brooklyn Bridge. Obviously saw a lot of smoke from the towers. We ended up on Murray and Greenwich Street. My officer transmitted over the air that we were a few blocks out from the box. Should we take it in. They told us to stand by.

Looking up at the towers and it looked like it just basically imploded. Then I guess the cloud came right at us and we got zero visibility, we couldn't breathe. We got -- put on our masks and tried to orientate ourselves where we were. From our vantage point on Murray and Greenwich, didn't see any other

K. QUINN

fire apparatus or officers or firemen in the whole vicinity.

After that, we worked our way over to West Street and we were headed towards -- we got our extra equipment off the rig, extra bottles, anything we could carry down towards the towers to see if we could help. The Battalion Chief, I believe, I don't remember his name, he told us to fall back and as we were falling back, I think we were on West Street, I think Murray again when the second one came down, same thing.

It just -- a lot of firemen running out. I didn't recognize any particular rigs at the time. Then we were all -- when we moved the command post back we staged in the area there. Then approximately I guess maybe two hours before number 7 came down, we went into Ground Zero and helped dig around and was there when they located Chief Feehan and one of the Chiefs pulled us all out because they said 7 was going to come down. We just went on the side of the financial building.

That is about it. Besides digging after number 7 came, I went back in, but it was basically when they both came down I was just basically blinded by the dust. You couldn't see anything.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay, great. The

K. QUINN

time is 1:30 p.m. Thanks for the interview.

File No. 9110340

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CHRISTOPHER JARONCZYK

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

C. JARONCZYK

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Today's date is December 13, 2001. The time is 2:36 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion New York City Fire Department.

Q. Conducting an interview with?

A. Christopher Jaronczyk.

Q. Of Engine Company 236, in regards to the events of September 11, 2001. If you would in your own words Christopher tell us what happened that day.

A. Okay. We got relocated after the second plane hit from our quarters into Manhattan to Engine 15. We proceeded to Manhattan, responded to Engine 15. When we got there we took in a run from the smoke in the area. Somewhere down near the Seaport area, we took that run in. We got there, we gave a 1033 and from there we were instructed to go to World Trade.

By that time, one of the towers had already come down. We proceeded over towards the World Trade. We parked the rig, I believe it was on Maiden Street, somewhere near Liberty Place. Got out of the rig, donned our masks and by that time the second tower had come down. This was approximately around 11 a.m. and we were about 2 or 3 blocks away. The area was already in total darkness from the dust cloud from the first

C. JARONCZYK

collapse and as we proceeded we heard and felt the second collapse and we ducked into an ATM machine to let the dust cloud pass by.

Then we proceeded down to, I believe it was Broadway and headed north up to Ann Street and Vesey and Park Place near City Hall. There was a makeshift command center. We were there for about 20 minutes awaiting orders. We were by then ordered to go down to World Trade, in front of 2 World Trade Center to start doing whatever we could, either searching for victims or survivors.

As far as seeing any bodies, we didn't see anything. We didn't see -- we saw other firemen, but we didn't see any other trapped firemen. We didn't see anybody really in need of help. We pretty much concentrated our efforts on the corner of Trinity Place and Liberty. We were putting out small fires, searching buildings, the adjacent buildings, for any signs of life. We really didn't see anything.

That pretty much proceeded throughout the whole day for us. It was very -- visibility was very low for most of the day due to the dust cloud and of course, our eyes were all watery because of that. Breathing was very difficult. We just proceeded to,

C. JARONCZYK

you know, we tried to get around the perimeter of the whole area. We really couldn't get down towards West Street because it was all blocked by debris. So we concentrated most of our efforts, like I said, near Liberty and Trinity.

However, we did make it down to West Street. We weren't able to go north on West Street because like I said, all the debris. That's about it. We really didn't see other companies. We saw lots of other firemen, but we didn't see any trapped firemen. We weren't able to rescue any.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. Great Chris, thanks. That concludes the interview, it's 2:41 p.m.

File No. 9110342

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JAMES IPPOLITO

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 13, 2001. The time is 1530 hours.

This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Firefighter James Ippolito of Engine Company 28 of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine 28 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Ippolito, could you please tell me what happened to you on September 11?

A. We were sitting at the house watch, and we heard an explosion, and some of the senior guys immediately started to tell us to get on the rig, because they knew we were going to go somewhere. We get on the rig, and then I think it went to second alarm immediately. We got the ticket. We were out the door immediately.

We started to head down the FDR where we could see the north tower, I believe, was the first one hit, was burning. A lot of black smoke and debris all around the building. As we approached, came out from

Ippolito

where the Battery Tunnel exit is. I guess that's by the south tower. We passed going north on West Street, coming right up.

The rig was swerving, and there were bodies all over the street. There was paper and everything in the air. We pulled up in front of the north tower, on West Street. There was a pedestrian walkway right near us, so we ran along the wall of the walkway to get towards the building, because people and debris were coming out of the buildings, and people were inside the lobby yelling to us to look up before we came in.

As we entered the lobby, we -- there was a chief there. I don't remember where he was from. He assigned us to team up with 4 engine, and we were to start ascending the stairs, because there was no elevator service, obviously.

So we teamed up with 4 engine. We proceeded to the B staircase, where there were a lot of civilians still coming down, but we had to walk single file up the stairs. We had roll-ups and spare cylinders, and we started making our way up.

If I can interject, before we entered the second -- before we entered the tower, I -- me and Mike Kehoe, another guy who was working in the company with

Ippolito

me, we heard a screeching sound, sounded maybe like a train derailling or something, and what they're telling us now is -- the time frame we saw in the paper, we think that was the second plane hitting. That was once we were entering the building.

So we started heading up. I guess we got up to the 30th Floor, and we took a break. We were taking intermediate breaks on certain floors, and we got to 30, and the guys were really fatigued, so we sat down. 4 engine was there. I remember seeing a guy from 13 truck there. Let me see. I'm trying to remember other companies that were there. I believe 9 truck.

We were taking a break. There were still civilians coming down. Let me just rewind again. We were, I think, on 20 -- maybe in the teens somewhere, maybe 17th Floor, when we making our way up slowly, and I believe it was a guy from 13 truck had come across. So we stopped, and a guy on, I think it was 13 truck, told us to come in the C staircase, because there were less civilians, and we would make better progress there.

We headed across to the C staircase. It was the same problem. You know, a lot of people still coming down. We couldn't get up any faster, so we went

Ippolito

back to the B staircase, and we were taking a break on 30, and that's when we heard a rumble, outside explosion, and I think that was the other building coming down, but we were getting reports on the radio that there was another incoming plane, so guys weren't sure. At first we thought it was the plane hitting, but we at this point -- we knew the plane was already in the building, and we heard rumbling.

The building started to shake. We all ran into the stairway, into the B staircase again, and the building started to shake and lights went out. Just got this tremendous rush of air coming up through a staircase. Everybody was just holding onto each other. Then we started to make sure -- you know, we didn't know what happened. We were -- everybody was questioning each other, what the hell was that. We thought it was another plane.

So at this point, our chief comes down. He was -- he was on that show, that 6 truck. He was with them, the 6 truck. That chief came down from floors above us. I'm not sure what his name was. He had come down, and he ordered us out, so at that point we started making our way down. I guess we were starting to spread out, I guess, a little bit on the stairs

Ippolito

coming down. I guess we were on 17. We took another stop. Lieutenant Becker wanted to make sure we were all together, and then we went down again. We kept coming down, got down to -- I guess we were about the 8th Floor when we saw 6 truck, and on our way down -- excuse me, before we saw 6 truck, we saw -- I saw at least two members from Squad 18 going up the stairs where I informed them that the chief told us everybody out. The chief gave us an order to all get out, and they passed me by. They kept going up.

So at this point, we were heading down again. We get to 6 truck. They are helping a woman down the stairs. We tried to help them, and Billy Butler from 6 truck told us to keep going. He said they got it under control, and they would get her out.

So we get down to the lobby where we find 18 truck, and Hughy Mettham, he -- we asked him where the rest of their guy was -- where the rest of 18 truck was, and he said they're all together. They are in the lobby, and they're getting out.

At this point, we made the decision to leave the building. We waited for 4 engine to come down. We went back to the entrance where we came in closest to West Street, closer to the Vesey Street corner, and we

Ippolito

stayed by the doors. The debris was all over the 1st Floor, and there was a lot of confusion.

I saw Von Essen there, and I saw Ganci there. We passed them, went to that doorway, and we waited for 4 engine to come over, where I believe it was a lieutenant working with them, he wanted his guys to stop. I guess we wanted to check in with the chief or something before they left the building.

We were all ready to go, and we made sure there were people outside by that walkway where we came in. They were telling us to look up before we run. I think that was 18 truck. They had already exited, and they were telling us look up before we run. That's what we did. We came outside. We ran to that wall by the walkway. There were still people coming out of the building, jumpers.

So we ran to the wall. We walked alongside, as close to the wall as we could. We got underneath the pedestrian walkway where 18 truck was. They were parked right there underneath the walkway, and we stopped, made sure everybody who went in with us came out, all our members of the engine came out with us, and we just started to walk.

I saw a whole bunch of members, right -- I

Ippolito

think it was the Vesey Street, corner of West and Vesey. We started to walk towards them, and there were all rigs and stuff outside, and that's where we were walking towards. Looked like some kind of maybe a command post or something was there. Started to walk towards it, and that's when the building came down. I heard an explosion and turned around and the building was coming down.

At that point, we dropped everything we had, at least I did. We started to run north on West Street. At that point, we were overcome with the cloud and it looked like -- felt a lot of wind again, got knocked down. I crawled. I think I fell under a van or something, and that dust started burying me in there. I started crawling out from there. I couldn't see anything. I pulled my hood over my mouth.

As I got on my feet, I felt another guy run by me, so I reached out and grabbed ahold of his cylinder. I asked him for a couple of hits from the cylinder, because I was choking. He gave me a couple of hits, and then a whole crowd of people ran us over. I lost him.

I found my way onto the island in the middle of West Street, the grassy island, and I somehow -- I

Ippolito

don't know where I was at that point. I got onto that island. I started crawling, and by the time I got out of the smoke, I was on Chambers Street, and then that's -- I came out, and I couldn't find anybody.

After a couple of minutes, I ran into 228 engine. That's where I rotated to on my second stop. So I knew those guys and I said -- I figured I might as well stay with a boss, any boss. So I stayed with them and finally I saw Kevin Murray, who was assigned to 11 truck, but he was detailed to 18 truck that day, saw him and Hughy Mettham come out of the smoke. I helped them, and I brought a big jug of water over there to help them clean up, get the stuff out of their eyes and mouth.

At that point, I went with them back towards the site, because they were looking for their guys. I was looking for my guys, and I was with Hughy. I figured I was with a senior man, that's good, so I stayed with him. I started making my way back towards the site. I ran into Lieutenant Rallis from 11 truck. He came in on the recall. I stayed with them for the rest of the afternoon.

They assigned us to go searching buildings in the financial center. So we went there and were doing

Ippolito

searches. The building was empty at that point. It was pretty much destroyed. I stayed there -- geez, I don't even know what time. I must have left around four o'clock or something.

We started heading back up West Street, and that's where I ran into the rest of the guys, Lieutenant Becker that I was with, Roy Chelsen, Mike Kehoe and Frank Campagna.

At that point, we went back to the firehouse, and the rest I watched on TV. As soon as we got to the firehouse, the 7 World Trade Center was falling down, so it must have been close to that time in the afternoon.

Q. If you can recall anything else prior to, I have a few questions, if you don't mind.

When you said you were on West Street, and you reported in, you reported in from the south and went north?

A. The rig, we drove. Yeah, I guess the entrance from the battery tunnel is south, and you have to drive past the south tower to get to the north tower.

Q. Right. Did you see any other apparatus?

A. Trying to remember. I think I saw 15 truck

Ippolito

in front of the south -- in front of the north tower.

Q. Right. Any others? I'm just trying to -- if you can remember them, fine.

A. Right. I think I saw -- remember seeing 15 and 8 truck, and that was really about it.

Q. Okay.

A. We got there pretty fast. I guess the fire was on the outside of the building, went to second alarm immediately, and we must have been among the first arriving units, I gather.

Q. That's fine.

The guy from ladder 13, as far as you could tell, he was by himself or was the rest of his company making --

A. There were other guys with him. I'm just not sure if he was detailed out to another company or whether it was his company.

Q. And Ladder 9 was pretty much their whole company?

A. Yeah.

Q. That B.C.'s name that you said his name is Picciotto, I believe.

A. Right, that's him.

Q. That's the guy that was with 6 truck in the

Ippolito

same staircase?

A. He was in the same staircase. He was above us. I don't know.

Q. He's the one that told you to get out?

A. Right, he was coming down from the floors above us.

Q. You saw Engine 228 after the collapses. Were they responding or leaving?

A. I think they were just responding.

Q. So they were coming towards you?

A. They were getting off their apparatus already. They were coming down the block.

Q. Coming south and you were heading north?

A. Right, on Chambers Street. Well, on West Street, but it was the Chambers Street intersection when I saw them.

Q. Right. All right. You said when you went back with the lieutenant from the truck, they assigned us to go into 7. Who was they? A couple of chiefs?

A. No, they didn't assign us to go into 7 World Trade.

Q. You said they assigned -- you hooked up with the lieutenant from the 11 --

A. 11, and to one of the financial center

Ippolito

buildings.

Q. Who is they? Was it a chief or --

A. It must have been a chief. He told us to stay and this corner, and he went to -- I guess it was a bunch of chiefs there together.

Q. Okay. So it could have been the deputy, it could have been --

A. Right. I'm not sure who told him, but then he came back and said they told us to go down there, so we went.

Q. Okay. That's very nice of you to give us this interview. Thank you very much.

A. Thank you.

Q. Do you have anything else to add, let me know?

A. No.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Thank you.

File No. 9110343

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TERENCE RIVERA

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

T. RIVERA

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: December 13, 2001.

Time is 1630 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual. Firefighter 6th grade, Terence Rivera, assigned to Engine Company 10 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine Company 4, temporary housing of Engine 10 regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Rivera, please tell me what happened on September 11 that you were involved in.

A. I was standing outside the quarters about to go home when the first plane hit. I heard a loud noise and then all of a sudden an explosion, looked up. I couldn't even tell really which tower was hit. There was debris flying. There was a lot of smoke and fire. I ran back inside, let everybody know we knew there was an explosion, grabbed my gear. I went as the extra man on the truck, on Ladder 10, right on the back step, because they already had their morning crew. Everybody was full.

We pulled out of quarters, we made a left and went towards West Street. We stopped on Liberty Street

T. RIVERA

at first to see if we could see which tower exactly was hit. That's when we determined it was the northern most tower. We went around the corner on West Street and the Ladder pulled right up in front of tower -- the north tower. The engine took the hydrant on the middle of West Street.

As I got off the back -- the back step, there were a few individuals that were civilians that were outside that were burnt. There was a -- he wasn't a regular security guard. He had a weapon on him. I don't know if he was FBI or Secret Service and he was trying to put the pants out on one individual that was conscious. His pants were still smoldering. I took the can, fire extinguisher off the truck and then sprayed down the pants on the person that was still conscious.

At that time, I had asked him where did this individual come from. He told me when the plane had hit, a fire ball had shot down the elevator shaft and had blown people out of the lobby.

I proceeded to render care. I went to get oxygen and a stretcher for the person that was on the street while the rest of the companies went inside the building into the lobby. As I got the oxygen and the

T. RIVERA

stretcher, I was just by myself and Engine 55 pulled up, which then I flagged the chauffeur from 55 engine to give me a hand to put the victim on a stretcher.

We did that. Then we stopped the first ambulance that was shooting down West Street coming from -- they were coming up towards South Street ferry side going up north. Then I went -- proceeded back in the building, I grabbed some tools. I went back inside, couldn't find a mask or a radio since I was the extra man and I went back inside. I was heading towards the east staircase, which is where I figured Ladder 10 would be and I saw the chauffeur from Ladder 10 was telling me to go back outside and don't come back in unless you have a mask.

So I went back outside. I spoke with the Engine 55 chauffeur to ask him do you have an extra mask. He said no, but he needed help hooking up to the stand pipe. So it was me, him and another individual that I don't know who it was. It was three of us, because there was a lot of debris falling down and by that time already there was people jumping. So we had one person looking up and two helping hook up to the stand pipe. Trying to do that.

Sometime while we were doing that, that same

T. RIVERA

individual that was -- when we first got there, that was trying to put the pants out, he came over and he is saying to us that it's a terrorist attack. You guys are too close. It's a terrorist attack. So once we got hooked up, I kept that in the back of my mind. Get on trying to get water going.

I'm pulling the supply line, trying to figure out where we are going to hook up to, and 55 Engine showed up. You couldn't really tell where there was a hydrant. I forgot, 10 Engine had hooked up to a hydrant, so the chauffeur of 10 Engine saw me pulling supply line that we relayed from 10.

At some point close to that, they were saying they had too much pressure, so I don't know if they were getting water or they were doing some type of -- 55 Engine chauffeur told Engine 10 that he was getting too much pressure. Then I went -- that same individual, the security or -- he told me to go over to the command post and let them know it's a terrorist attack. There are more planes in the air.

So I went across the street where they were starting to set up. I told them. They said we know. Just stage down by the Financial Center, that driveway down there, that's where everyone was staging. So I

T. RIVERA

went to go back to go find 10 Engine chauffeur to tell him let's go down here. This is where they are staging, and he didn't want to leave the rig. He said, I got to stay by the rig. Just get me some water. So I got him some water and sometime when I was getting the -- put in the back or getting out, that's when the second plane hit. I went inside the rig to escape the debris falling down on us for a few moments.

I came back outside the rig and I was looking for 10 chauffeur. I couldn't find him. I figured it's going to be an extended operation so I didn't want to go back down where they were telling to us stage. I said you know, just ferry, until I find a mask I'm going to bring spare cylinders inside and try to bring spare cylinders up and down the staircase. So I could do something else.

I grabbed two cylinders, went back inside the building and was trying to find anybody from 10 or anybody that I could hook up with, anyone who might have an extra mask. As I went back inside, that's when they were telling us evacuate, the fire command was saying get out of here, so on and so forth.

As I was coming outside, I see a lot of people running towards the Marriott Hotel, I see people

T. RIVERA

running -- everyone was just running. And I hear shh. It sounded like someone was turning on a hydrant and I look up and the first tower was coming down. I proceeded to run up north and I run towards the overpass that connects World Financial Center where they have -- where the high rise rig is at and also -- I think it was Rescue 1 or Rescue 5's vehicles underneath it.

As I run towards it, I know that I'm not going to escape the -- escape it, so I dive under -- I don't know even know which rig it was. I dive under a rig. At the same time it felt like an explosion. I got bounced around underneath the rig. I just kept on crawling, trying to get to the other side. I was thinking that the rig was going to collapse. I got caught up or temporarily pinned. I just kept crawling until I felt like when I was near the end or nearby the bumper, so I could roll out, in case the rig was going to collapse.

I waited a few moments until I felt like all the heavy debris was over, all of the stuff, debris was landed or until everything went quiet. All I could hear was pass alarms and I started pushing debris out from under the rig. I couldn't breathe because I had

T. RIVERA

no mask and I had no radio. I just grabbed my T-shirt, put it over my face and I started crawling in the direction that I last remember going up north, trying to get out of the debris. I'm crawling over. I feel the grass. I have an idea where I'm at. I am going up the incline and I crawl towards the World Financial Center. I break the glass. Eventually I hit -- the glass is still intact, so I break the glass to go inside the Financial Center.

Then EMS, which is staged on Vesey, they see me when I come in and I'm pretty much out of it, out of breath and almost passed out. I just collapsed when I get inside. They come inside and drag me out. Another Firefighter came in right behind me.

I was in the back of the ambulance for about maybe 5 or 10 minutes, trying to get air. I didn't want to go to the hospital because I knew I wasn't severely injured. I had numbness in my right arm, but I knew I was okay and I was going to hook up with two other firefighters. We were going to basically look for people.

They come running around the corner about 5 minutes after that. The other one is coming down. So I jump back out the ambulance in my T-shirt and

T. RIVERA

underwear, run up towards the water. It's getting better, that debris field and that's when I met members -- I saw two members from Engine 10 that were by the railing about to jump in the water. We all were trying to get accountability of who was where and what was going on.

We started walking towards -- I went back to get my bunker gear. We started walking towards the water, towards the launches where one of our members from Ladder 10 was having chest pain and bring him over -- make sure he goes on the ferry. They were ferrying people to Jersey. Not too long after that they were telling us to run again. There is a gas that they can't control, so we run past Stuyvesant High School and then eventually when they set up the next command post, which was in that area. That was it.

Q. Okay, I have some questions. When you first responded, do you know who the truck officer was?

A. Lieutenant Harrell, he was the company officer.

Q. He is okay?

A. No. Dead, both officers.

Q. Yes, I know, Lieutenant Atlas. You said Engine 55 was parked and you relayed from 10. 10

T. RIVERA

parked in front of the north tower? Did 55 stop before or after?

A. 55 was pretty close on the overpass between the Financial Center, like right by the curb.

Q. They were past 10?

A. Right, they were past 10. They were north of 10.

Q. The staging area across the street, was that across the street or is that in the garage of the tower?

A. It was across the street when the World Financial Center started. It's where the Winter Garden is. The glass is right down there. There was a --

Q. Who was at the command center?

A. I saw Chief Ganci one time when I went over there. They had a lot of companies coming from Brooklyn.

Q. Other companies. Of the other Chiefs you don't recognize?

A. No, I don't remember any of them.

Q. So the World Financial Center overpass was the north overpass from the north tower to just north of the Winter Garden.

A. Between both, right.

T. RIVERA

Q. When you met the guys from Engine 10 that were going to jump in the water, who were they?

A. There was Mark Dulski and John Schroeder.

Q. And the guy from 10 with chest pains?

A. Serge Pilipczuk.

Q. -- Pilipczuk?

A. Yes. He went to Jersey, from Ladder 10.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: If there is nothing else you would like to add, this concludes the interview, thank you.

File No. 9110344

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN McCABE

Interview Date: December 13, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

K. McCABE

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 13, 2001. The time is 3:48 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with --

A. Kevin McCabe, Ladder 122.

Q. This is in regards to the events of September 11, 2001. If you would, Kevin, in your own words, just tell us what happened on that date?

A. I was coming to work that morning. Soon after we heard either a second or third alarm transmitted in the Borough of Manhattan. Somebody said the Trade Center was hit by a plane. At the time that didn't make sense to me. I'm thinking what do you mean got hit by a plane. I'm thinking a small commuter plane or something of that nature.

I remember going up to the house watch, seeing it on TV, seeing the smoke issue from what turned out to be the north tower, thinking to myself and the guys, we are going to be going to that. A few of the guys, we went up to the roof of the building, where we have an unobstructed view of the city. It was a crystal clear day. There I was thinking oh, my god, we are going to go to that.

K. McCABE

Came downstairs, I had already taken my gear out, but now it was a question of are we going to get a ticket for that and sure enough about, I think it was 8:54, we got a ticket that we were going to respond in to the Brooklyn side of the Battery Tunnel. Some street there. I don't know the name of it.

I remember getting on the rig, got everybody together, we took off. I was driving that day. I remember making the turn off 7th Avenue on to 9th Street. 132 was coming down 9th Street and we met them at the corner and they followed us down to the initial staging area, which was right on the Brooklyn side of the tunnel.

I remember pulling up there by the tunnel and seeing a bunch of units off to the side. We stopped the rig. I remember seeing 105 was there, just from remembering the ticket. There was probably like 10 companies there, a lot of traffic. The guys got off the rig so they could go walk to the side rails so they could still see what was going on. Being on the rig, I didn't have any TV screen, so a lot of the stuff that I experienced early on that day didn't make sense, because I think I remember hearing somebody say soon after that the other building got hit.

K. McCABE

Around that time the teleprinter on the rig, the MDT, we got another ticket that told us to respond into the Trade Center. I remember driving through the tunnel. Both tunnels had been shut down. They were just opening up traffic so all the apparatus could get through.

We ended up going through the left tube, the left lane, which was Brooklyn bound, but they had stopped all the traffic. We were going through the tunnel. There was at least an Engine Company in front of us and an Engine Company behind us, but I couldn't see anything more.

As we were going through the tunnel, I remember hearing -- I knew the voice, Captain Vinnie Brunton saying -- he was trying to call somebody saying they are getting a report that there is a bomb in the building, which again didn't make total sense to me because you got some information from people or you just heard like the other building got hit. What do you mean, the building got hit. I'm thinking this whole time that it was an accident, so far it was an accident, buildings got hit.

I remember going through the tunnel. Our procession, the lane that we went through came to what

K. McCABE

seemed to be at least a solid 5 to 10 minute stop. We didn't know what was going on. As it turned out, a car that was Brooklyn bound had gotten two flat tires, so they had to move some cars out of Manhattan bound traffic in that tube just so we could get around them. I remember driving past and looking down and seeing the guy's car had two flat tires on the drivers side, which I would imagine whoever went through the other tunnel, they actually got through the tunnel a little faster.

Anyway, we come out of the tunnel. I remember as we got up on West Street and we are heading north on West Street. I'm looking ahead. I remember kind of leaning forward and looking up and seeing the smoke in the buildings. I remember seeing what to me looked like road kill in the street. I'm thinking what the hell is that over there, not really knowing what it was, you know, driving around, there was some debris in the street. There were people directing traffic.

I remember at one point seeing what looked like a piece of an airplane. Now at the time when I saw it, I'm thinking oh, that's part of the airplane. But I'm still thinking a much smaller plane. I also see some of this -- what I was thinking at the time looked like road kill, but I remember one time slowing

K. McCABE

down and leaning up on the steering wheel to look down, and it was an intestine. Clearly that's definitely what I saw. Talking to the guys later on, they saw lots of other carnage that was on the street, but I'm trying to drive the rig [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As we passed the Liberty Street walkway bridge, we were now looking to try to find a spot on either side of the street, but there was really nowhere for me to tuck the rig in. It seemed like there were tons of units there already. We ended up going north of the Vesey Street walkway bridge, and we ended up pulling off to the left-hand side of the street somewhere, you know, a block or two or some distance past the Vesey Street walkway.

From there we got off the rig. We got all our gear together and we made it a point to -- I said, listen, let's make a point not to get separated. I remember the boss telling the guys, something to the effect that this is going to be a bad day. It was just not going to be a good day.

So as we were walking back, headed back to the command post, which was set up -- I believe it was on the west side of West Street, I guess the American

K. McCABE

Express building was behind us and we were looking directly at the north tower. From there you could see that building, the Marriott Hotel was to the right, the south tower was behind the Marriott.

I remember looking up, watching, there was smoke pushing from both buildings, but at this time when, you know, I know you are hearing bits and pieces of information but you don't have time to discuss it, get all the facts, like two commercial air liners hit the building.

I don't think I was fully aware of that. I think it was half of -- this is unbelievable what we are watching. A little bit of excitement too, like wow, we are going to be -- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] but we were probably in the command post for probably not more than 5 minutes, maybe a little more. I don't really remember the exact time frame, but I remember while we stood there in these two driveways, looking up at the north tower, and seeing debris coming down and I remember as the debris got closer to the ground, you realized that it was people, because then you started seeing arms and legs and that was, I guess, like watching a train wreck.

K. McCABE

You just had to watch. You just couldn't believe what you were watching.

I remember seeing probably from that time frame, 8 to 12 people, where you would have one person coming down, there was a second and a third person on their way down, I just remember it was like cannon balls hitting the ground, boom. Most of them were landing up on I guess there was somewhat of a set back on the front of the building, where they weren't landing on the street, because it was, I guess some sort of a set back. They were landing there.

I remember one person actually hitting a piece of structural steel over a glass canopy and that just disintegrated. Just the most horrific thing I ever saw. But like I said. You watched it in somewhat disbelief, but you just -- I can't believe what I'm watching. I remember the reaction of the guys behind me. Like oh, my god, they are jumping, they are jumping. And somebody saying turn around, don't watch it. I remember just saying, you know, I don't need to watch that, turning my face away and you just hear the pounding, like boom, it was just tremendously loud, like taking a bag of concrete and throwing it in a closed courtyard. Just a loud echo, just boom, boom.

K. McCABE

Anyway, I don't remember exactly who was in the command post with us, but I know we went through the tunnel with 105, 132, because we were all stationed. Actually I remember vaguely seeing the 48 Battalion on the Brooklyn side. All these companies I remember seeing on the Brooklyn side. I remember seeing 105's rig, because they got a spot closer to the command post. They actually I think were parked actually just north of the Vesey Street walkway or very close to it. I remember seeing that.

We ended up getting our assignment. We were going to go into the south tower. With that, we started heading south along West Street and we didn't go straight across because with all the debris and people that were coming down, we headed over towards Liberty Street and kind of took some head cover from the walkway bridge. As we crossed over West Street we were still more or less under the Liberty Street walkway, and I know 131, they were behind us, because when we ended up going in the hotel they were right behind us, but we were all going in groups of three or four or five, like looking up to make sure it was clear and then running diagonally across the street and then entering I guess through the restaurant portion of the

K. McCABE

of the hotel, which is right on the corner of Liberty and West.

We went inside probably 60 or 80 feet and then we came to a stop because there were units in front of us who had come to a stop. It was almost like you got the impression that you are trying to look over the crowd to see who was leading the procession or who was directing traffic ahead. But in my mind it was like well, as soon as the companies in front of us move, that's when we start to move.

Everybody was standing fast, everybody had their gear. I remember civilians that were working in the hotel. Some woman bringing out a bottle of water, a big 5 gallon bottle and she was trying to pour cups. There was a desk off to the side. I said why don't you put that down on the desk there. Somebody brought out cases of water. I remember taking a case of water and walking it ahead and putting it down for some of the guys that were maybe 20, 30 feet ahead of us.

I don't remember seeing head pieces of the guys in front of us, but some of the guys that we were with, one of the guys who actually spent a year in 105, said he saw 105, they were just some distance in front of us, where you could still see them, but they were

K. McCABE

also standing fast like I said. You weren't moving because there were guys in front. You just assumed that they were going in the same place. You didn't make a push to go through the crowd.

Sometime after that, we were probably there for another say, 7, 8 minutes, then there was talk in the group with us and 131 and whoever the company was in front of -- I don't remember, but saying, I don't know if we are in the right place.

I remember walking. Now at this point I had taken off my turn out coat and my mask and laid it down I figured because I'm sweating my nuts off at this point. I said when they start moving, we will grab our gear. We will go through. Somebody also said it's like an hour walk to 70. We just figured like, wow, we were going to be going up to just try to evacuate some people.

I remember walking straight ahead more towards the front of the lobby of the Marriott and I grabbed the maintenance guy and I asked him where are we right now. He said you guys are in like the restaurant or bar area of the hotel, which was where we were standing, but the actual physical bar restaurant would be between a wall. We were in an area that was

K. McCABE

probably like 20 feet wide. To our left would be West Street, straight ahead would be the north tower. To the right the south tower. Behind us was the door that we came in. I guess we were in like a corridor that would take you to the lobby and through the wall that was to our immediate right, the restaurant bar area was directly behind that and the doorway to get in there was more or less -- the doorway that we came in, if you made a sharp right, that would take you into the restaurant bar area.

He told us where we were and I asked the guy how do we get to the south tower. He said go straight through the lobby more or less. He said you go through those double doors and you make a right and it will take you back to the south tower. I remember asking him, are we going to be inside the whole time. He said yes, there is like a tunnel or some overhead that you won't be exposing yourself to debris that's falling down.

I remember telling our Lieutenant and the boss of 131, I said Lou, we are not in the right place. We have to go through this crowd. We have to go through those doors. With that we put our gear on and two of our guys had gone to the bathroom. You turn

back, where are they? They went into the bathroom, which was actually in the bar restaurant there. They said that when they were in the bathroom there was a ton of guys in there. Some guys who have heard this story thought I can't believe they went to the bathroom, but you were standing fast. You were more or less staging. There was nobody going anywhere.

Once they came out, we said we are not in the right place. It was only a matter of a minute when they showed up saying we are not in the right place, get your gear, we are going through. Shortly after they came out and got their gear on, we were ready to go straight ahead, you heard a roar, some sort of a vibration, like a vrr vrr vrr, getting louder and louder.

My first thought to myself, I live down in Rockaway so I have heard planes coming overhead for years. It sounded like a plane getting closer and louder and louder and next thing you know, you felt the building shook. At that moment, it was I think every man for themselves. I think I might have heard somebody say it's coming down or something.

But at the time I was facing straight, which I was facing north in the hotel lobby. To my left was

K. McCABE

West Street and I remember thinking to myself I'm going to head towards that perimeter wall and there was a desk somewhat behind me. I remember diving to my left and back between the perimeter wall and a desk. I remember hearing crashing coming down.

There was dust starting to blow in, because I remember starting to feel stuff in my mouth. Trying to spit that out and I remember having problems breathing, because there was just so much crap blowing into my face. I remember just lying there on the floor thinking I can't breathe too well right now because I got all this crap in my mouth and I'm just waiting for something to fall on me and then I'm just going to sit here and I'm going to suffocate.

Once all the crashings, you know -- after that went silent, I could hear guys behind me inside the doorway where we had just come in. I guess there was some sort of a fire gate or something or a security gate, I'm not sure. That had somewhat come down and closed and it was only open like 3, 4, feet. There was a bunch of guys that were trying to lift it up. I remember getting up. I still -- I had my mask on at this point, because just when we were getting ready to go, I had all the gear on, I had a Halligan, an axe, my

K. McCABE

mask, getting ready to parade straight ahead.

I remember turning my light on and looking. It was pitch black. You had a haze of dust looking around for the guys that I was just standing with. I was able to finally Lieutenant McLetchie and John Leanza. At this point we were missing 3 guys. Vitiello, Koyles and Kasey were not there. It was just like, where are they?

I remember walking around and just kind of doing a quick look around trying to look through the dust and the darkness. Looking straight ahead I could see that it was pretty much from what I remember sealed off. That part of the lobby was now blocked with whatever. Talking to Kasey, not Kasey, Leanza and McLetchie, I said I don't know where Dave and the other guys are.

So I remember walking back towards the guys that were lifting the gate up and they were trying to lift it up, but it was open like 3, 4, maybe 5 feet. I remember going back and grabbing like a podium and wedging it there. That way the gate wouldn't come down any further. I was able to walk out the same door that we had walked into. At this point, I still don't know the south tower came down. I'm convinced that up until

K. McCABE

that afternoon I was saying I was in the hotel when it got hit by a plane.

I remember going outside. Now to my left down Liberty Street in the direction of 10 house, I remember seeing parked cars that were on the same side of the street as us and they were covered in rubble, probably just higher than their front ends, because I could just still make out their flashing headlights with the alarms going off.

I remember looking south on West Street, past, on the side of the Liberty Street walkway bridge where Ladder 113's rig was. I remember that was a ball of fire. I didn't know it was 113's rig at the time. I remember there was a ball of fire over there and I was like wow, what's burning over there.

There was an Engine Company hooked up right outside the hotel where we walked in, I guess hooked up to a hydrant and hooked up to the stand pipe. I don't remember what engine it was, but I remember there was another guy, a fireman, he had blood on his face and he was trying to force open some of the -- I guess EMS compartments on the rig.

I tried to give him a hand, we couldn't force them. I remember there was other debris burning in the

K. McCABE

area of the doorway. I remember it was one of those mats that you would hang on an elevator when you were moving. One of those was -- a piece of that burning by the doorway. So I remember getting the can with this other guy off the engine. I remember to get it off, you had to climb over some debris and kind of force it out. Like it was kind of wedged in there.

But there was a lot of debris on it, but like I said, I still didn't know what had happened. I knew there was a mess out there. There wasn't a lot of people. Like I said it didn't make sense. A lot of this stuff, it was later in the day when I found out what happened, I remembered. I was like yes, come to think of it, there wasn't a lot of activity on West Street. It was like a white powder. I don't remember climbing over a lot of debris, but me and this guy, we operated, I don't know, maybe 10, 15 minutes.

In that time, McLetchie and John Leanza came out of the hotel. We had a little meeting I guess in the street between the Liberty Street walkway bridge and the entrance to the hotel where we had gone in. They said they had a guy trapped. It's been a while. Now I'm not sure if it was the boss of 55 or the boss of 58 Engine they had trapped. I guess he identified

K. McCABE

himself. They said we needed some other guys to get him out.

With that, some other guys came out from the direction of Liberty Street walkway bridge. I believe it turned out to be 113. We had a little meeting. They were saying we got a guy trapped somewhere in the hotel in the direction more towards the lobby area. I remember the boss telling me and Johnny C, go in with them and try to get him out. I told the boss why don't you go back because you know where he is. I'm going to head back to the rig, because that was one of the things we said, if we get separated at any time, that's going to be our meeting, go back to the rig.

Just backtracking, when we were still in the hotel, I remember I was able to get in touch with Dave Koyles. I was able to get him on the radio. I got his voice, but what we didn't do is -- I don't remember there being a lot of radio traffic, but there was enough where I couldn't get a conversation out of him. I couldn't -- he didn't -- I couldn't get enough information for him to tell me where he was, or for him to tell me that the other two guys that we were missing were with him. So I had radio contact with him at that point so I knew he was alive, but I didn't have any

K. McCABE

contact with the can man, and I think it was Dave, I think he had the roof.

Now after working with the guy on this Engine Company, I remember walking, I was now up on West Street. There were 3 of those big pieces of steel that were stuck in the ground that you see in all the pictures. I remember walking around that and looking at those and thinking if they fall over they can reach me.

With that I saw in the background was the Marriott Hotel, and my first thought was that looks like the Oklahoma City building, because I remember the whole middle of it just seemed like it was carved out.

Somewhere right around that time I got a Mayday. I heard a Mayday transmit. Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, Ladder 4 with a Mayday. Nobody answered it. The Mayday came again. I answered it. I said go ahead with your Mayday. He said I'm trapped. I was knocked unconscious. I don't know where I am. He gave me his name, it was Mike Brennan, because I said what was your last known location. He said he didn't know. He was knocked unconscious but he was trapped.

I don't even know what I said to him after that. I remember just looking around thinking I got 2

K. McCABE

or 3 guys missing. I don't know even know where to begin. There was just nobody around. I just felt helpless at that point. You think that's one of the things I should not think about now and again, but, I started to walk north along West Street heading back to the rig. I figured at some point when I see a Chief or I will tell somebody that I got a Mayday from a guy.

Like I said, I had no clue where the guy was. I kept walking. Thinking back, it was white powder. I don't remember climbing over mountains of debris, but I remember, I guess, stepping over stuff. I got back, I passed the north tower. I got to the Vesey Street walkway. I passed that, I got to our rig, which was again, I don't remember exactly how far, but it was some distance past.

I got to the rig, the guys weren't there. Also with this, back at the hotel, McLetchie, Leanza and the guys from 113, they ended up going back into the hotel to try to get -- I think it was either the boss of 58 Engine or 55. I have to ask them. I don't remember now.

So they are in there, I go back to the rig. They are not -- our guys aren't there. So I continue walking north, because I think I see guys in the

K. McCABE

distance. I guess I remember seeing guys. So I start walking, but I also remember seeing just like a few straggler firemen walking, but nobody is coming together and saying we got to do this, because I think I was half shell shocked and I guess a lot of other people were.

Shortly after as I'm walking, you hear another loud boom. I hear guys behind me, I guess I hear some commotion behind me and I turn around and I see guys running towards me. Again I think I hear somebody say it's coming down. I remember turning, looking and looking up and seeing the dust cloud opening up overhead.

With that I got that sick feeling. I am just like all the wind is out of you. Saying like holy shit. Throw the Halligan down that I had in my hand and I start running as fast as I can heading north. I'm reaching for the shoulder straps. I'm thinking I don't have much time here. I'm going to have to take shelter. I'm passing rigs, I'm passing cars. I got the waist strap undone.

Now I'm just running. I just have my helmet and my bunker gear. I passed a police car I think it was. I duck in behind the back of the police car. I'm

K. McCABE

thinking to myself, don't climb under the car because when it gets hit the car is going to lurch. I don't want it landing on my back. I just got on my hands and knees against the back of the car, just put my head down. More or less waited to get crushed again.

Then it was silent. Then you just heard, crrrrrrr, just a rush of wind getting louder and louder and everything is just blowing in. Now you got hit with the dust again, just a lot worse than it was inside, because now there was I guess, there was nothing really protecting you from the dust, but I remember that blowing like halfway down your throat to the point where you are really gagging on it. But I'm still waiting for heavier pieces of debris to start falling around me, which didn't happen,.

Now it goes pitch black. I remember hearing someone, I guess it would be to my left, saying help me, help me, I don't know who it was, I didn't really find that person. I remember standing up again, it's pitch black. It's like I don't even know -- I know something fell down, but I still don't know the building completely fell down. I guess at that time I'm thinking maybe a portion of the top fell down.

When I got up, I continued walking north. I

K. McCABE

guess I ended up on Chambers Street, so I was walking in that direction and I think it was at that time, I remember helping an EMS worker put one of their personnel on one of the carry chairs. They needed a hand carrying her. I remember walking and stepping over some debris, you know, to kind of help walk. I remember feeling exhausted.

Somebody else walked up and I remember only carrying this person for not too long, grabbing someone and saying, you got to help her. I got to go -- at that point I was thinking I got to see if I can find the guys I'm with. At that point I'm thinking I'm the only guy from the company going home. Because I know the other two guys were in the hotel. Two guys, I don't know where they were, one guy I had radio contact briefly before the second one came down.

I ended up getting up to Chambers Street, still not being fully aware of what was going on. I remember telling guys I was in the hotel when a plane hit. Within the next hour or so, the irons man, Leanza, and McLetchie, I got them on the radio. I got Koyles, the first guy I had gotten radio contact with after the first building came down. I had him on the radio. But two of the other guys were still no contact

K. McCABE

with them.

I guess within the next 4 hours, we accounted for all the guys. One guy ended up after the first building came down, Kasey ended up getting on a boat and going to a Jersey hospital. Dave Vitiello, he ended up making his way up to Chambers and West Street so everybody was together. I remember sitting there talking and when I said to somebody that I was in the hotel when a plane hit, he said what do you mean the plane hit. He goes both buildings had been hit already. I said what do you mean. I said what noise were we hearing. What we heard was the noise of that south tower coming down.

At that point we had gotten word that all our guys were accounted for. We started hearing stories that some guys were missing. Now before we got verification that Kasey was in the hospital, I remember telling the boss -- now this was probably, I don't know if it was an hour or two later, I said I'm going to take a walk back over to where we were.

But at this point I guess I was kind of gun shy from walking down West Street. I said I'm going to walk down along the water and then I'm going to come up like Liberty and see if I can see anything.

K. McCABE

I remember when I came up Liberty to West Street, now I could see this devastation that I definitely didn't see to that magnitude after the first building came down, but now there was just mountains of steel. I remember seeing what turned out to be 10 Truck flipped on its side, kind of twisted. I remember walking across the bumper of a TAC unit, thinking that there were guys that I knew in TAC, who actually didn't make it. I remember walking across the bumper of one of the TAC units, climbing up on some steel and just figuring that if Kasey was around maybe I would see him.

I ran into some guys from other companies that I knew. What was left of the hotel was -- what I had seen of the hotel was no longer standing. It was just one portion, I guess of what would be exposure 4 side still standing, I guess looking at it. I'm on the west side of West Street now, looking across at the hotel. I guess the one end of the hotel closest to Liberty that was, I guess, you know, the only remaining portion of the hotel that was still standing.

Now Leanza and McLetchie had said they left the hotel because they needed a generator, because the power tools, the battery operated tools that they were

K. McCABE

using to try to get the boss out, I think it was 58, but whatever, they ran out of -- the battery power went dead so they went looking for a generator. They said when they came out, they were now between the hotel and the Liberty Street walkway when the north tower came down. They ended up running over to the base of the pedestrian walkway and they took shelter at the base of one of those columns. Fortunately they survived also.

After that I ended up going back over to like Chambers and West. Stayed there for the next couple of hours, wanting to do something, but it was just -- at this point my eyes were starting to bother me.

Probably around 8 o'clock that night I guess it was, 8:30, me, McLetchie, and I'm not sure who else, a few of us ended up taking a ride to the hospital, because that afternoon I remember I had my eyes flushed like three or four times at the Stuyvesant High School and then ended up going to the hospital to have them checked again, where I had my eyes flushed again.

I remember Gregg McLetchie, he had a bump on his head attended to, went to Bellevue Hospital, ended up coming back to quarters probably about 11, 11:30. For the first time saw it on TV, the actual planes hitting the buildings and actually seeing them collapse

K. McCABE

to the point where they just completely pancaked. I said like -- I couldn't believe that the buildings came down, because I remember sitting there in the afternoon looking up at the smoke telling people what's left of the buildings must be up in the smoke, because I don't see anything.

Then some other things made sense. Like when I came out of the hotel, now I realize why it seemed like it was so quiet, because nobody was left there. Anybody that was in the command post I guess they got blown down the driveways and they probably hadn't dusted themselves off yet.

The piece of airplane that I originally saw coming out of the tunnel, now it made sense. At the time it didn't make sense, but that piece of an airplane was way too big for the type of plane that I envisioned hitting this building. It's like -- you know, it's a jumbo jet. Come to think of it, that piece of plane looked like it crushed half that car and I remember that first piece of intestine that I saw, I was thinking at that moment that must be the pilot of the plane.

Then I find out it's all this and I realize oh, my god, all these people got thrown out of the

K. McCABE

building and the noise I heard was the sound of the tower coming down and the other building was coming down. I think that was pretty much my day.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay Kevin, thanks for the interview, the time is 4:21 p.m.

File No. 9110345

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN DUGGAN

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 14, 2001. The time is 1:24 p.m.

I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER DUGGAN: Firefighter 4th Grade Kevin Duggan, assigned to Engine 1, was on rotation with Engine 210 on September 11.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: And this interview is in regard to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you would, Kevin, just tell us in your own words what happened on that day.

A. I came in that morning for a day tour. I checked the rig. We were sitting in the kitchen having breakfast, and we heard over the voice alarm Brooklyn announcing the second alarm at the World Trade Center, and at that point, we turned on the TV to see what was going on.

We saw a lot of smoke coming out of the World Trade Center, and then tone alarms went off, and we were sent -- 210 was sent to World Trade Center. We were in the quarters of 211 and 119 at that time, because 210's quarters were being redone.

So we were over near towards in Williamsburg

K. DUGGAN

basically. We responded, and I never saw the ticket, so I wasn't sure if we were responding to the incident or if we were responding -- if we were getting relocated, and so we headed -- I figured we would take the Brooklyn Bridge, and we headed in that direction, but apparently had been dispatched to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, and so we went past the bridge. We were taking Park Avenue right under the BQE. So we went around and passed the bridge and were heading towards the tunnel when the fellow sitting on the other side of the rig saw the south tower explode. He saw an explosion.

He told us the building just exploded. We looked over and we saw the south tower, a lot of orange and a lot of smoke. So we continued towards the Battery Tunnel. There was a lot of traffic. Took us awhile to get there.

We got to the tunnel. We saw -- I think it was 105 or 132. They were right ahead of us, and we came in together with them. The tunnel was backed up. There was a car with a flat tire, so we were delayed. Actually, the captain of 210 gave a report that 210 would be delayed due to traffic.

We came through the tunnel finally, and we

K. DUGGAN

stopped because we got out of the tunnel right at West Street just when you come out of the tunnel, and we had a detail from 219 with us that day, and he wanted some water. So he hopped out of the rig and went to get water, which was in one of the back compartments.

We actually thought that's why we were hopping off the rig. I thought we were hopping off the rig, but the captain waved us get back on, but the detail grabbed the water jug so we could have some water, and as we were there, 279 went past us while we stopped and put the water jug on the rig.

Then we pulled up, went up a little further along West Street, past the first pedestrian bridge, so that's Liberty Street, went past Liberty Street, and somewhere between the Liberty Street and 2 World Financial Center, we stopped and hopped out of the rig.

The command post was in front of a parking garage at 2 World Financial Center. So we got off the rig, grabbed our roll-ups and our spare cylinder, and we reported to command post. As we were heading that way, I saw Joe Falco from Engine 1 working with the chauffeur from 65 engine hooking up to a hydrant, and I didn't say hello to him. I just walked past him.

K. DUGGAN

We reported to the command post where Chief Ganci and Feehan were, and the captain reported in, and they told us to stand fast. This was right in the mouth of the parking garage. So we were standing there. They put the engines on one side, on the north side of the ramp, and the trucks were on the south side.

When I was standing there, I saw 24 truck was there, and so I said hello to the guys from 24 truck. I asked them were they sent on the third alarm. They said they were sent on the fifth, and one of the guys told me to be careful in there, and I said I will, and at that point, people started jumping. So there was a lot of debris had already been falling.

At this point, there were jumpers, so when the people started jumping, they tried to move us back into the garage so that nothing would hit us on the head, even though we were far enough away on the west side of West Street. They still said all right, just move back inside so nothing -- when you're standing there no one -- we don't want anyone getting hurt.

So in the tunnel there, we were just in the mouth of it. We were there. It was 210. I saw 211, 202, 34 engine, 91 engine, 44 engine. I saw Joe

K. DUGGAN

Angelini from Rescue 1. He was wearing a different helmet, and in my mind I was just, like, when did Joe transfer to Rescue 1, not realizing that he was just grabbed a helmet from somewhere else and just wearing that.

So we were just watching people. People were jumping. The fire was -- a tremendous volume of fire. Our captain said he didn't think we'd be able to put out the fire because of the volume of fire versus the volume of water. He said the sprinklers were going to be out, the standpipes were going to be out. So we were there.

They told us there was a captain -- I think he was a captain -- who was a liaison between the command post and where we were, and he told us gear down, take off your bunker coats. It might be a little while before you go to work. So we were standing there. I took off my mask and jacket and put it all down. Again, just inside the mouth of the garage. They wanted everyone inside the garage.

At that point, I saw Captain Brethel from 24 truck, who was just a little to the north of the command post. The driveway ramps down. He would have been -- he was above where the driveway ramps down. He

K. DUGGAN

was on the street level. He was calling all the off-duty members together so he was trying to -- I found out later that he was off duty. He had driven Father Mike down.

So he was calling the off-duty members together so I guess he was trying to get a company of guys together, and that was just to the north of that driveway where the rest of the command post was, where the other chiefs were. So we were standing fast.

I saw a couple of guys that I knew, said hello. We weren't sure what we were going to be told to do. Just at that point we still -- not realizing what could we do and what were we going to do, but I did expect we were going to be sent in at some point, and so we geared down.

My captain actually was standing -- he had taken his bunker pants down to his knees, and we were standing there, and then we just heard this real loud roar. We looked up and we could see the south tower. Looked like the middle of it was just exploding out, and at that point, one of the officers just said, "Run," and we were just turned and started running into the garage, so I just turned and ran in.

I was just -- I didn't think it was a great

K. DUGGAN

move to be running into the building like that, but there was nowhere else to go, and I was just thinking, like, holy shit, we're going to be buried in here, thinking the tower would probably fall over towards us.

I remember thinking I left my -- I had taken off my mask, and when we started to run, I left my mask down. I don't even have my mask, but we just got real lucky and went right to the back of the tunnel or the parking garage and opened up a few doors.

There was nothing, nowhere to go. We opened up one door, and there was a stairwell, so we all just piled into the stairwell and -- so it was basically all the engine companies that had been standing there made it into this tunnel, made it into this stairwell.

Then once we got into this stairwell, we weren't sure -- we wanted to get out of the stairwell, and there was a door to go upstairs was locked, and they were trying to find a maintenance man. We were looking for some tools, looking to see if we could pop the lock, but at that point one of the guys just pushed the back door.

There was a back door, and he opened it up and just showed us what was out there. It was pitch

K. DUGGAN

black, so we closed the door. It was the emergency exit. So we just waited there for -- the radio was complete silence, couldn't hear anything. There was nothing coming over the radio.

We were waiting there. We didn't know what to do, but we figured just wait a few minutes. They opened up the door again maybe five minutes later, and it wasn't as dark, but it was still pretty bad, so then at that point there were a few captains who had gotten together, and they said, "All right. If it lightens up a little more. Then we'll just get out of here."

So the third time they opened the door, it looked like it was snowing out, and they said, "All right, let's go." So we just went straight out towards the water, because that's where we ended up being. We were in the -- we found out afterwards we were in the 2 World Financial Center and through the parking garage.

That leads you right out towards the marina there, the harbor. We got out and everyone just kind of went on their own. Some guys went south. Some guys went straight to the water. Some guys went north.

I looped around towards the north, and because it seemed -- I guess it just looked like it was whiter up that way, and went north. Then the next

K. DUGGAN

thing was, was trying to find the rest of the members. I saw the guys from 34 engine, but not 210. Then I found one guy from 210, who was the detail, and then I found the captain of 210, and then the nozzle man of 210. I had back up that day.

So we had everybody, except the chauffeur, but the chauffeur wasn't in the tunnel, because he had been by the rig. He was hooking up. So we weren't sure what happened to the chauffeur at that point, and my captain -- because he had pulled down his bunker pants got knocked down when we started running originally, and he was a little bit disoriented, and he had gotten hit with the dust cloud more heavily than the rest of us, so his mouth was all dry and everything.

We were trying to get him some water. He was very concerned about calling his wife, because his wife -- he had been talking to his wife right before we got dispatched. So he was looking for a pay phone and basically just walked around.

As we were heading north, we were looking for some water, trying to get -- we had our crew, and there was a pay phone there, so the captain called his wife, let her know he was all right. Then one of the other

K. DUGGAN

guys wanted to call his girlfriend because she worked -- she was a court officer, and he wanted to make sure she was all right, and so he made that, and actually he called his parents, and at that point we were together. We were trying to decide what to do next.

My captain didn't want us to head back towards the north tower, because he said that it was a terrorist attack, and we couldn't be sure what was going to happen next, and we still hadn't -- we were still very -- we had gone around, around the -- we were probably up getting near Vesey Street maybe at this point. No, we probably hadn't reached Vesey Street. Somewhere right around there. We were still right by maybe 4 World Financial Center, because we were in the grassy area there, and then the north tower, we heard the rattling, and we saw the north tower collapse.

The dust cloud came at us again. So we just headed north and again we got separated a little bit, and we just kept -- we just headed north as the dust cloud came towards us, so we headed north to stay out of it as much as we could. We still got hit with it, but by heading north we were getting away from it rather than -- the wind was blowing south, so once that had passed, we realized it was just, again, it was like

K. DUGGAN

the snow was falling, so we headed north to try to regroup, got up past Stuyvesant High School, ran into Chief Collins from the 31 battalion, which was our battalion, and he was a little disoriented, as well.

So there was a guy with some oxygen, so we gave him some oxygen. We walked north out towards the street and out towards West Street there. At that point, we were looking for -- just regrouping, and at that point, there was a battalion chief from the safety battalion, who was disoriented.

He broke an ankle and looked like he was in shock, and so he was just kind of wandering. We got -- he was right next to an engine company, so we pulled a board off the engine company, and there was a woman there who -- of course I asked if she was a nurse. It turns out she was a doctor, but she helped us.

We put him on a board, and there were a couple of ambulances there, and put him on the board. He was giving my captain the information for his -- wanted someone to call his wife, and he was concerned about -- there were guys from the safety battalion in the building, and I think he might have given the name of one of the firefighters who he was with, and yeah, he was pretty much in a state of shock.

K. DUGGAN

So he was put on the board, put him in the ambulance, and my captain who had been knocked down and disoriented himself said he was going to the hospital with the chief. He said I could come along, but I said no, I want to stay, because Chief Collins from the 31 battalion was -- I thought he was a little disoriented, and I wanted to stay with him, and so I stayed with him, and he didn't want to go to the hospital in the ambulance.

At that point, we met up -- I met up with the other guys from 210, but not the chauffeur, still the nozzle man and the detail from 219, and then we were pretty much by ourselves at that point. So then we saw 211. Since we were in the same quarters with 211, we knew all the guys and their captain, Captain Clark, so we kind of fell in with them, and that was our crew for the rest of the day.

210 went in with 211, and so at that point there was a report of a gas leak. They told to us move north again, so we went north again, and we realized everything was all right to go back, so we went back then. We reported in to the command post they had set up on West Street. This is after both towers had collapsed.

K. DUGGAN

We were told -- we were in Group 7, and we'd be put to work in a little white. So we were just all in the staging area right by Stuyvesant High School, so we could go in and use the bathroom, whatever. We were there for an hour or so.

Then at that point, since both 210 and 211, we had everybody except the chauffeurs, who we hadn't accounted for, the captain of 211 wanted to go find his chauffeur, but they had parked on the east side, so we went over by on the Church Street side. So that's how we headed back that way to go to find 211's rig and see if their chauffeur was all right.

We were able to finally -- took us a while to walk over, get down that way, and we found 211's rig and the 211 recall guys. They said that their chauffeur was injured, but he was all right. He ended up with a broken arm, and he was in a bit of shock, but he would be all right.

So then we were working with the 211 guys, and the recall, and the nozzle man from 210. I was still concerned about the chauffeur from 210. I thought I heard his voice on the radio at one point that he was working with somebody pumping water, and so I was pretty sure he was alive, but we wanted to verify

K. DUGGAN

that.

So we walked back towards where 210's rig was. So we went back north again, went all the way back maybe up to Murray Street, came back around, and then came back down West Street. We actually ran into the 210 guys from the 210 recall and found the 210 chauffeur, and it was good that we found him, because he thought that we were gone, and we thought -- I thought he was still alive, because I thought I heard his voice on the radio, but he didn't think we were alive. He thought we had gone in.

So once we found him, and then we were able to -- everyone was all right. We realized that everyone from 210 was all right, and that's when we started getting reports of how many other companies were missing. 207 was missing. 226 was missing, in the 31 battalion, and I heard -- I had run into guys, a couple of guys from 1 engine, who had been in the north tower, and then I got a report afterwards that Lieutenant Desperito from one engine didn't make it, and I heard Father Mike hadn't made it, and I heard Captain Brethel, who I had seen that day, he didn't make it.

The next day I found out about Mike Weinberg

K. DUGGAN

who was off duty, that he didn't make it, and Steve Belson as well, and Orio Palmer, the chief of the 7th battalion, but it was really -- after the collapses, we never operated.

We were standing fast, and we helped out some company hook up to a standpipe somewhere. 119 was throwing some water on it, but when we went back, they already had some machinery in there. It was just weird.

So then we just spent -- after I made it with 210, we just spent the rest of the time looking to see who else we could find, and digging or anything, and that was it. But then sometime that night, I guess around midnight, we started heading back to Brooklyn. And that's about it.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay, Kevin, thanks.

That's the conclusion of the interview. It's 146 p.m.

File No. 9110346

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER SEAN BROWN

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 14, 2001. The time is 12:07 p.m.

I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, safety battalion, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER BROWN: Firefighter Sean Brown, Class 6, Engine 16.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: This is in regards to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you would, Sean, in your own words, just tell us what happened that day.

A. Well, about 0845 hours, the morning of September 11, 2001, just about to come off tour. Lieutenant mentioned to me that might be staying a little later than usual today, due to the fact of a report of a plane hitting the north tower of the World Trade Center, and the lieutenant said to start gearing up.

Approximately at 0850 hours, 16 was called, was called first due on the third alarm. At that point, myself, Ronnie Cifu, Lieutenant Mickey Kross, Firefighter Paul Lee, Firefighter Timmy Marmion, Firefighter Pete Felluca and myself, Sean Brown, firefighter, Grade 6, responded to the scene.

S. BROWN

We arrived via Church Street, tried to make the left turn onto Liberty Avenue, but could not. Liberty Street, excuse me. We could not gain access to the south tower, so we ended up backing up, staying on Church, and at that point, that was about 0900 hours.

When we started to back out, back from Liberty Street to Church, due to we couldn't gain access, the second plane hit the south tower, showering debris everywhere. So we proceeded northbound onto Church and ended up parking the rig on Park Place and making our way southbound towards the north tower, which would be Building 1.

So we made entry to the World Trade Center with our roll-ups and extra cylinders, and we at that point went into the lobby, where they were just setting up the command post, and that would be approximately ten after nine.

At that point, we were met by Ray Downey, Chief Ganci, Commissioner Feehan, and Father Judge and Tommy Von Essen, the commissioner. We were then teamed up with Engine 1, asked to proceed up to the 23rd Floor in order to set up communications.

We were with a couple of ESU cops, and one of the -- I would say officers from the Port Authority, so

S. BROWN

our orders were to go up with engine one with three roll-ups, extra cylinders, and set up communications, and then proceed up to the 70th Floor.

We were warned that whoever was on the nozzle that day would be sucked out of the -- possibility of being sucked out of the building, but they said it would be about an hour walk up, but our main job was to set up communications.

We were on the 23rd Floor, set up communications, when we heard a rumble. I would say we were on the 23rd for about five to ten minutes. The building shook. Lights went out. Asked my officer if -- you know, what happened, and he thought maybe the top of the building got blown off.

I turned to him and I said, "What do we do?" And some chief appeared. Don't know who the chief was. Chief from the department appeared, said, "Start making your way out of the building. The south tower just collapsed. A third plane is coming towards the north tower."

At that point, we gathered up all our gear and were ordered to leave the roll-ups and start proceeding downward.

At that point, the team became separated. We

S. BROWN

were all together. A minute later everybody was separated, so it was myself and Firefighter Felluca. We started to head downstairs, and at that point Lieutenant Kross wasn't with us, became separated from us, so I ran -- we were at the 19th at that point, ran back up to 23rd to look for him, but to no avail. Radioed him. Couldn't get him.

So we started to head down. We ran into another officer from a Manhattan company that knew Lieutenant Kross, said he was starting to head down. We proceeded downward, ran into 110 truck. That was the first company from Brooklyn we ran into, told them what we heard, and then we heard a transmission over the radio.

The Maydays started coming in to vacate the north tower. So as we started going down, we started running into Brooklyn companies and telling them to -- that we were told to vacate the building.

At that point, we proceeded down. Most of the civilians -- we didn't see any civilians at that point. It was mainly firefighters. Made it down to the lobby. There were about maybe 30 firefighters that were with us. Made it to the lobby, and the lobby was like a war zone. All the windows were blown out, and

S. BROWN

the command post wasn't there.

We proceeded out onto West Street and proceeded to start walking north, and the building was a little listed when we came out, and we made it to the corner of West and Vesey when the building came down. That was myself, and Firefighter Tim Marmion and Firefighter Pete Felluca.

At that point, attention was called upon me to go back and get -- there was a chief that they pulled out, so I ran over to grab that chief, and proceeded to move to pull him towards the ambulance. We got him the help he needed.

I have medical training, so I figured I would do my best to help him out, and put him in the ambulance. Then the building totally collapsed, and I would say I was on West and Barclay. The guys from the company were on West and Vesey.

I radioed to the company, and they -- their precise words were, "Run, run for your life," and me, the chief and some ESU cop that jumped in to help me dragged him to an ambulance, put him in an ambulance, took off and proceeded to get caught in the dust cloud.

Had all my gear on, had my hood on, and I

S. BROWN

still was wearing my mask at the time of the dust cloud. Call it luck, as you may, chief. Can't tear it off my back, though. It's free.

Proceeded to realize before I got hit with the cloud I was walking northbound on West, and I was about West and Barclay, proceeded to keep walking west, and got caught in the cloud and ran into one of the chief's that got caught in the cloud, but didn't have -- he was so far back from the scene, didn't figure he'd get caught in the dust cloud, so he didn't have his mask, and helped him out, pulled him out of the scene, too.

So we shared some air, and at that point after the dust cleared we went back and started looking. I got on the radio and started looking for my team and ended up meeting back at Vesey and West where we originally were together, and after that was just all started looking for people. That's it.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Great, Sean. Thanks for the interview. The time is 12:16 p.m.

File No. 9110347

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER SIDNEY PARRIS

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

Parris

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 14, 2001. The time is 1:19 a.m.

I am Battalion Chief Robert Burns, safety battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER PARRIS: Firefighter Parris, 1st Grade, Engine 21.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: With regards to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you would, just tell us in your own words what happened on that date.

A. We responded first on the 6th alarm, and we loaded up extra bottles, everything we think we might need, extra Scott bottles and oxygen, in case there were a lot of injured members and pedestrians.

We left quarters. We got downtown in the vicinity of the World Trade Center. We tried to get as close as possible to supply the building, supply the siamese. Came down West, and I made a left onto Vesey Street, and I was -- I parked the rig by a fire hydrant in front of the post office, and supplied the World Trade Center across the street right near West and Vesey.

I was standing on the corner of West and

Parris

Vesey by the post office as the company went to the command post. There we saw 28 engine, and I think it was 33 engine. Their pumpers were in the same vicinity, and the three chauffeurs were supplying the siamese in that particular intersection.

After supplying the building, I was listening to the transmissions and standing at that corner. We began to just see people jumping left and right constantly, two-minute interval, maybe a minute and a half.

After that, FBI agent came down the block. He identified some landing gear that was in front of our rig, asked me to make sure no pedestrians came down the block to interfere with any type of metals and debris that were there, because they were trying to identify to put the pieces back together for the plane.

At that particular time, one member from here that was detailed to 7 truck had just come down, because 7 truck left before he got to their quarters. He took my Scott bottle out of the cab at one of the compartments, and from there I left West and Vesey, the actual corner, I left there by the parking garage, to close the compartment that he left open and to put my

Parris

shoes on the rig.

At that particular time, I saw another FBI agent come by, who was starting to log some of the things. He was on his transmission, talking to whoever. They told me that another plane was in the area, and we thought that -- the chauffeurs -- some of the guys that were out in the street thought it was a third plane.

At that particular time, I walked to the corner of Church, because I heard the plane, but I couldn't see anything. Afraid it was going to hit the same part of the twin tower and make it topple and start a domino effect. As I got to the corner of Church and Vesey, that's when the building, the south tower, came down right on the corner, and from that point on, it was like mayhem for me.

I ran towards the Brooklyn Bridge, in that vicinity, just running. I got maybe about three, four blocks. It was difficult for me to run, and I was slowing down, and a plain clothes cop, police officer, was running by, grabbed my turnout coat and was telling me to keep running.

From that point on, I saw someone open a door, and we just dove inside the door. After the dust

Parris

settled, came outside, and I heard transmissions from 21 engine standpipe, the guy that had the control. I heard him calling, but he couldn't hear my transmissions to him, so I was making my way back to the scene, and I was hearing a lot of members.

I heard 39 chauffeur. I heard him calling his unit. And 16 truck, he was getting no feedback. In trying to make my way back, I can't remember what street we were on, but it was a bunch of cars, buses, mail trucks, Fire Department, all types of vehicles that was on fire before you can actually make it to the scene, so there was no pressure, no hydrant pressure.

The responding companies that were coming in, we started breaking windows or trimming windows to see if the buildings had a system that was already fed where we can get a line off of it, get some kind of pressure to get closer to the scene. We had to get past these cars.

At that point, it just looked like a war zone, and I was -- can't draw back that much of who I saw or where I saw them. People thought that I was missing at one point for a long time. It was some truck coming from Brooklyn. I don't know if it was 101 truck said he heard that I was one of the missing, and

Parris

they were looking for me, and he sent me to another command post that was -- when they changed it and put a command post down by the Brooklyn Bridge, and told me just report there to let members know that -- and the chief in charge of the command post that I was still here.

I got back to -- when we outted the car fires, I got back to the actual scene, and just as we got back there, I think was with Lieutenant Curran from 9 MetroTech, and the building's second tower started to come down, and we had to run again.

Then we made it back after the second tower collapsed, and again we were helping with the pumping line and everything with the cars and debris, trying to get closer to the scene. After that was just digging, you know, and just seeing other guys come in.

I was seeing people -- I thought I was seeing guys there because people were coming and asking you, you know, other members, and PD was coming down, has family on the job, and asking you if you saw so and so, because they saw your unit on your helmet, knowing that they were working that battalion and whatever and figured we'd run in together and asking if you saw a family member or friend.

Parris

I thought I saw quite a few guys that I saw, but not thinking, we were just at a funeral in Staten Island, not even -- I don't even know if it was a week ago, so I thought I saw these guys there where these guys were lost. So it was all -- I don't know if you call it shell shocked or what, but it was quick for me, because I was outside, but it was late, much later on in the day before I hooked up with anybody from my unit.

The backup, I believe, was Jimmy Foley. He had a radio, because just recently we started carrying radios for the backup, and I couldn't hear -- I didn't hear any response from Jimmy. I don't know if he was giving any transmissions, but Mike Burn was the only guy I heard, and Mike couldn't hear me. The captain I couldn't hear.

That was it for the guys from this company.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Great. Thanks for the interview. The time is 28 after, and the count number is 65.

File No. 9110348

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ROBERT CHYRIWSKI

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

R. CHYRIWSKI

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 14, 2001. The time is 2:51 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER CHYRIWSKI: Firefighter Robert Chyriwski of Engine Company 3.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: -- in regards to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you would, Rob, in your own words, tell us what happened on that day.

A. Okay. That day, of course, we're all sitting in the kitchen and then I see the news come on and something has hit No. 1 World Trade. Before you know it, we get the call to ride down there. Knowing that it was a high-rise building -- and on the assignment we notice, you know, we had the high-rise unit in quarters and it wasn't on the ticket -- I merely got on the phone to call the dispatcher. I said do you want us to take the high-rise unit? In all this madness that might have been going on in the command center at the dispatcher's office, they said take everything you got.

So we automatically just started riding down,

R. CHYRIWSKI

and on our way down we heard over the radio the staging area will be on West Street. So right around when I hit Canal Street and Varick, I headed down West Street. I parked on West Street. The guys got out. I wanted to get in better position by 1 World Trade because we had gotten there before the second plane had hit 2 World Trade. So in the whole madness of things, I tried to reposition the rig and tried to get a hydrant. So I tried further down West Street, which I'm probably right around across from the hotel, the Marriott, when I hear this loud noise, this crash. That's when the second plane hit Tower 2.

So I managed to turn around and head back up north towards 1 World Trade, not knowing what had happened, that it was a plane that hit. But upon meeting up with my members on West Street by 1 World Trade, I was told that another airplane hit 2 World Trade. Right then and there I knew we were under attack.

Chief Ganci wanted to clear out the -- I guess it was the bike path or pedestrian walkway, whatever, just to line up all ambulances because he thought there was just going to be hundreds of casualties. I had to reposition the fire truck at

R. CHYRIWSKI

least two times, and by doing so I ended up further north and west and the truck ended up by 3 World Financial Center. We also had the high-rise unit with us and that ended up being parked under the pedestrian bridge that crosses over West Street that links 6 World Trade with 3 World Financial Center. So it was directly underneath there.

Then 39 Engine, which has high-rise two, they pull up. So they pull up close to our truck and they were kind of like in the scuffle trying to position rigs. Chief Ganci was telling them to move here because he wanted to make a clear way for ambulances. I ended up hooking up with the chauffeur from 39 Engine because he was high-rise, too, and we kind of like worked together with our equipment, and one thing led to the next. We were just standing there waiting for orders. Engine 3 was pretty much still waiting on what news to hear from the Chief, what they're going to use, what type of equipment.

I took a walk over to the high-rise unit to try to set things up to pull the ramp out because we had the bottles in there and that's the only way that you really get the heavy stuff out, the cylinders. Then I just look up at 1 World Trade and see what's

R. CHYRIWSKI

going on and it was just like it seemed hopeless, like what can we possibly do with the people just falling out of the windows left and right and not knowing how we can get this equipment up there.

Then I look and I see Mayor Giuliani and Von Essen and Nigro and a whole entourage walking south. I don't know exactly where they were going, but I saw them. Then I went back to 3 Engine, which I said was by 3 World Financial Center, and I was with the chauffeur from 39 Engine just waiting to find out what we would do. One thing led to the next and my company, 3 Engine, came back and they didn't get an assignment yet.

Then I see Captain Danny Brethel. He needed a face piece for his mask because, I guess, within the scuffle of getting out that morning. I went into the rig engine and gave him a face piece and that's the last I saw of him.

Another one of my members was detailed to 26 Engine. He was like an extra man. He jumped on a rig and he didn't have a mask. So he came up to me and I gave him my chauffeur's mask so he can go operate, and he ended up hooking with 12 Truck because he missed 26 Engine going in. His name was Adam Mazy.

R. CHYRIWSKI

I guess one thing led to the next. We were just standing there looking at all this chaos going on, the two towers just burning, and before you know it, I'm just hearing this loud roar and I look up and I just see this big cloud coming down. That was when 2 World Trade started to come down. People were just saying run, run. So I just took off.

I started running north and then I head west down Vesey Street, and I guess I ran down until I got to North End. There was another block and I started running north again, and luckily I was able to beat out the whole dust cloud. I didn't get enveloped in it.

It seemed, when everything just calmed down, I started walking back, and at that point I thought I had lost the guys from 3 because I thought they might have been in there, or wherever they were, they didn't get out. But luckily we hooked up back on Vesey Street. They were looking for me. I was looking for them. We met and at that point we were told by the Chief from 6th Battalion, I can't remember his name, that everybody just retreat to the River Terrace, on Vesey Street and the River Terrace, everybody just go there.

Pretty much we stayed there and we were

R. CHYRIWSKI

helping out victims. Victims were coming in. Ferries were coming in, taking the injured to Jersey. We were helping with the civilians and firefighters, helping them move along the way, getting on these ferries, and the next thing you know, Tower 1 collapses, it's on its way down, and at that point everything just seemed hopeless, the way you felt.

Then we just started walking further north. We were all together. Engine 3, our company was together, and we walked to Stuyvesant High School, and that's pretty much where we ended up for the rest of the day.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Okay. That concludes our interview. Thanks, Rob. The time is 2:59 p.m.

File No. 9110352

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM CASEY

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is December 17, 2001. The time is 12:18, and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the safety battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter 1st Grade William Casey from Engine 21.

The interview is taking place in the quarters of Engine 21.

Q. William, just tell us the events as you remember them on September 11.

A. All right. We were in quarters when we saw it on the television with the plane, and I believe it was Tower 1, the first one that got hit.

Our captain came down the stairs. He let us know to start getting the bottles ready, stuff ready. He assumed that we were going to be going shortly.

He came down. I think we went on fifth alarm. I forget what the assignment was. So we loaded up the rig. As we were heading out of quarters, we actually saw on the television the second plane hit Tower 2, so we headed down.

Sid Parris was our chauffeur. We went down Second Avenue. I believe we were parked -- I think it

W. CASEY

was the corner of Vesey and -- I'm not really sure which corner, but anyway we came around. When we pulled up, of course, you could see the smoke, see a lot of stuff going on.

We walked into Tower 1, the north tower, and hung out in the lobby waiting for instructions on what to do. At that point, it was a lot of chaos. You were hearing jumpers. You were hearing different things going on. You saw different companies. We weren't told what to do really.

So then we got our instructions, and we followed the captain by an elevator, one of the elevator banks. Somebody told us there was somebody trapped in the elevator, so we opened up the doors. We had the rabbit tools, so we just pried it open a little bit, and then we pulled it open ourselves, and there was a lady in there, and we got her out.

We then went to another embankment, because we were with -- I believe the company -- I believe it was 13 truck. I'm not really sure at that time. We were going to go up the stairs, but we ended up -- there is an elevator would go up to the 24th Floor, which is what we took.

Then we started to proceed up, and I don't

W. CASEY

know what the stairwell number was, stairwell letter, to the 27th Floor.

At that point, there were different companies up there, different people up there. At that point, as soon as we got up there, we all hit the ground, because the building started shaking. We didn't know what that was. We assumed it was some floors above that had collapsed. We weren't really told what it was. We found out, obviously, that it was Tower 2 that collapsed.

At that point, I believe it was a chief -- I wasn't sure where he was from. He came down from somewhere. He came from one of the areas on the 27th Floor, and he told us to just get off this floor. So we were told to get off the floor.

We started to proceed down the same stairwell that we came up, and with that, our control guy was talking to the captain, because he didn't follow us. He wasn't coming with us right away. So he told him, "Yeah, yeah. Keep going down, I'll catch up with you," and stuff like that, because he just wanted to make sure everybody was off the floor.

With that, I proceeded back up. It was on the 24th floor. I proceeded back up, because I said

W. CASEY

I'll go hang out with -- you know, I'll stay with the captain, and this way if he needs a hand with something.

On my way back up, I came across a civilian on the 26th Floor, and he was struggling, so I was caught in between. I didn't want to leave him there. He was by himself. There was nobody there in the stairwell at that time, and so I had to help him. He was not making it. He was falling down the stairs. So I put him on my shoulder, and I proceeded down with him.

At the 19th Floor, I came across 13 truck, which I made sure the captain relayed to my boss where I was, so everybody knew what was going on, because now I was away from -- I didn't have a radio. I was the nozzle man. He gave me one of his guys to help me, because we didn't -- I wasn't going to get this guy out of the building by myself.

So with that, we proceeded down the stairs, and it was not chaos. It was not -- I didn't hear anything with his radio, not like anything happened. Still not hearing, not knowing that the other building collapsed, and we just proceeded down. The guy -- we had to help him. He was dragging his feet. He really

W. CASEY

couldn't do anything. Every time he wanted to stop, we just kind of lifted him up in the air. We didn't stop. That was the one thing we didn't do, but it was not like it was people running over us or -- it was calm.

When we got to the lobby finally, there was a lot of ash and stuff on the ground, which I just assumed was part of the plane now, stuff. It must have been the other building collapsed, and part of it went in there, but still not aware of it.

Of course, like I said, in the lobby, I saw people that I knew, firemen. Nobody really was rushing out, because there were still civilians. So with that, I asked somebody from 2 truck did he see any of my guys. He said, "Yeah, they just walked out."

So then I knew that the guys were out of the building, and so I was going to -- we were going to go out with this guy, and we had to run out, because we were afraid -- like I said, there were people jumping, and so we ran out a little with him, but couldn't really run. We were dragging him.

Once we got across the street, I believe we went a little bit north.

Q. This was on West Street?

W. CASEY

A. West Street. Well, we crossed over West Street. I don't know the street that we crossed over to, but we went up a little north of the trade center, so we never looked behind us, really never knew that Tower 2, which is really now south of you, I guess, not knowing that that's actually collapsed, still not knowing.

We got across -- like I said, I guess we crossed West Street. I don't know the little side street here, and we came to an ambulance, and we started -- they didn't have a key to it. We started getting ready to get this guy into the ambulance, and with that, you heard this -- it was almost like a roar, and it was like a rumbling, and I turned back.

I kind of froze, because when I turned back, I started seeing the building starting to come down, and when I turned back around, there was nobody -- there was nobody there, so I kind of just dove up against a fence. It was like a parking garage, an open parking space.

So I just put my face piece on, ducked my head, and it was frightening. It was very -- I thought that was it. Stuff was going over. It stayed dark. It felt like an eternity. I'm sure it wasn't, but it

W. CASEY

just felt long.

At first I couldn't get my face piece on, like I said, so I was choking on the rubble and stuff, and I got it on in a lit bit of a daze. I didn't know where I was really at first, and started to go west, I guess, but then once you get your bearings now you want to turn back around because, of course, we had that guy, and I still didn't know where the guy that helped me with 13 truck.

When I started heading back, there was this chief -- you know, he didn't have his -- I think his helmet got knocked off, and he had like a -- looked a broken arm or something, and his face was bloody, so I wanted to help him now. So we just started walking him to an ambulance, because it was further west.

Now, when you wanted to head back, there were a few chiefs coming towards anybody that was going back that way. We had to regroup. It was sort of like we have to go around and you can't go back that way. So now I don't know what happened to the guy I was with, you know, the guy from 13 truck or the guy we helped out, but they were saying, "You can't go this way."

I guess they were still worried about collapse. You couldn't really tell what just happened,

W. CASEY

so we walked around -- it was like a -- walked all the way west and then came back up. I don't know which street we came back up, but we ended back up on West Street, north, of course, of the towers.

Q. You walked around by the water?

A. Yeah. All right? Walk around by the water and then walked back. It's almost like I walked around that parking lot that was on the other side now. Cars were blowing up. I guess stuff hit it, and they started -- you know, it was pretty weird.

I don't know the time interval now, and now I came across the control guy from 21 engine, so because -- he didn't know where -- so it was kind of like we had to see each other. He was asking where the captain was. I didn't know if the captain was behind me or not. You didn't know, like I said, at the time I didn't know where anybody was then, if they followed us behind.

I would have to assume that -- you know, I didn't feel good about it, because I didn't assume -- I knew I wasn't out of the building that long, so they would have been out -- it wouldn't have been that much time for them to get out, anybody that was behind me.

So then it was just a waiting game then. Now

W. CASEY

everybody was -- because he didn't know still where a couple of our other guys -- because they were running from if building, too, and they just got out, but they were in a different direction, but then it was just -- we were there the whole -- you know, till late, sometime at night, but it was basically any time that we wanted to try to get in, it was just -- became so many people were there now that they weren't really letting us get in or other crews were already in, and it was just basically a waiting game on West Street, and somewhere. I forget where else we were.

And then after a certain time, we headed back. During the time I said we were hoping to hear. We were hearing so many conflicting stories. We thought maybe our captain was out. We found out he was the only one, of course, that didn't get out, and like I said, the rest of the time, I barely remember what happened. It was kind of like I was in a fog at that time, but that's basically the gist of my story.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay, William.

Thanks a lot for your information.

The time now is 12:29, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110353

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ADRIENNE WALSH

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: The date is December 17, 2001. The time is time is 1445 hours.

This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, Firefighter 2nd Grade Adrienne Walsh of Ladder Company 20 of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 20's office regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Could you please tell me what happened on that date.

A. Well, I wasn't working. I was in my car on the BQE. I had entered the Kent and Wythe Avenue exit, and we were in bumper to bumper traffic. I was on my way to fire ^ inaudible, and as I approached the towers, I saw through the warehouse buildings a white puff of smoke and what seemed like confetti, and I thought, oh that's interesting.

As we edged along, again, there was an opening between two, and I saw black smoke, and I saw three floors of fire, which I thought was very bad for a building like that. I knew we were on our way down

A. WALSH

there. We were about fourth due.

So I said, "Oh, damn. I'm missing the fire of the century."

As we inched along under the Promenade, I was listening to the radio, heard the DJ say that the second -- oh my God, the second building approaching, and all of a sudden, we pulled out again from a warehouse, and I saw the second explosion, so we had two buildings on fire.

I inched my way off on the Atlantic Avenue exit, sped to my parents' house and dropped the keys, car keys, off to them, because I didn't want to get a ticket for alternate side of the street parking.

I ran to my apartment and changed my clothes, put my running shoes on and literally ran to work. I got to the bottom of the Brooklyn Bridge and ran in front of -- I think it was Engine Company 246, and they gave me a lift across the bridge. I got off across the bridge and ran up to Lafayette Street.

By the time I got to the triangle here on Lafayette, the first tower just fell, and there were streams of people coming up Lafayette.

I ran into quarters, quickly went upstairs, put my uniform on, quickly ran downstairs, got my

A. WALSH

bunker gear on. When I got down here, I saw Greg Edwards and Captain Weldon had already come, and we were all running for gear.

58 truck was relocated here, so he said -- Captain Weldon told us to put every piece of equipment on the truck that we had, spare cylinders especially, anything we had.

So we did that, and all of a sudden the tone alarm went off, and I believe 58 got a call for a woman trapped in Cedar Street. I'm not completely sure about that.

We all piled on top of the rig, and he took off down Broadway. As we got past City Hall, the sky disappeared. It was like snow and crap everywhere just flying through the air. We got down. We parked. I think it's Liberty Plaza where the guy -- the plaster guy with the newspaper is sitting there.

We parked right outside there, and I go to the back of the rig to look for a Scott pack, because I have no air at all. We have plenty of cylinders. We have no mask.

As I got to the back of the rig, I don't know why, but I looked to my right, and I saw a black cloud the size of the biggest skyscraper I've ever seen

A. WALSH

actually coming, hurdling at us like a tornado, and I just yelled, "Run," and I took off.

Captain Weldon was in front of me. The chauffeur from 58 truck was over to my left just -- he was either even with me or just above me, and George Hough from Squad 18 was right behind me. We ran down the block toward the east side, and I thought to myself the building -- I knew it was the second tower going, and I thought if the building was going to collapse down, that if I beat the cloud, I would beat the building, and I saw the size of the cloud, and I knew I wasn't going to beat the cloud, but I gave it my best shot.

So I ran down the block, and three quarters of the way down the block, there was a door open. Some maintenance workers left the door open to the basement of another -- I think it was another office building. It was about the only light you saw. I ran into there.

I think the chauffeur from 58 got in first, Weldon then I -- Weldon was first. I crossed the saddle just as the black cloud took us over. I mean, you could just feel -- supposedly George told me he got blown down by the blast. He was not more than, I would

A. WALSH

say, ten yards behind me.

We got into the hallway. I turned around, and I started banging on the door, because I knew the guys were behind me, so they could find where I was, so banging on the door, banging on the door. "We're over here. We're over here."

We went into the hallway. We found some hose, and we went back outside, because we couldn't see a damn thing, and we used the hose -- we put the hose in the door, and we walked -- the hose outside, so we at least had a line to follow back to find anybody, and eventually black became a lighter black, it became a gray, it became like a really bad, bad snowstorm.

We then walked across Liberty -- to Liberty Plaza, where there were cars and lights on, and there were eventually -- there were people there. I don't know where they surfaced from, but there were a few people there saying people were stuck under things.

The skin of the building as all over the place, so we searched under the skin of the building, searched under the cars, through the cars. Nothing.

So we then decided we'd walk around to Cedar Street to see if anybody was, in fact, trapped in those buildings. We did walk around there. I think we spoke

A. WALSH

to somebody in the basement of the building, a person -- no, nobody was in that building, made a quick check of that area, the surrounding area, continued to walk -- I think it was down Cedar Street to the Westside Highway and got to the Westside Highway.

There were rigs everywhere and skeleton fire screws. For example, I mean, if you knew how many people, how much personnel was down there, to see those few individuals down there, you thought, where the heck is everybody else, but there were guys down there attempting to stretch lines from engine companies, which is what we were trying to do.

We kind of gathered at the median on the Westside Highway. There was an officer there. They decided to get a manifold in, because they were going to have to stretch numerous lines off this manifold, so we were working on stretching the manifold, picking up the lines, feeding the manifold, got all that hooked up, and there was no water pressure, so that was another problem.

We attempted to put out the car fires that we had with the water pressure we had, and then we proceeded up under the foot bridge to where the main tower here, closer to the Westside Highway, had

A. WALSH

collapsed, and Chief Haydon was on top of -- he was on top of the truck or what was left of the truck, and there were a bunch of us waiting down below, and I guess he was giving us directions, and "Guys, over this way, stay together. I don't know what to do with you."

So we mulled around there for awhile. I got myself a mask. I just found a mask in the street, and I picked it up and carried it with me. We walked -- we walked through the rubble around that way to where they wanted us to be. I forget what that street was where they kind of put us all over just to gather us and to get us all together.

So I saw Regina Wilson from 219. I spoke with her, trying to figure out -- that's where I saw the bulk of the people. After I got off the Westside Highway and we went further west down that block, that's where you saw more people, more firefighters. And for the rest of the day, we just searched through rubble.

Then we were instructed to search through two or three buildings to make sure they were stable, and then they pulled everybody out because of the pink building. Was it 7 World Trade, that was going?

Q. Right.

A. WALSH

A. Then they pulled everybody out. But we went through a couple of buildings for stability. I remember doing that, at least three that I remember, and that's when we met up -- I meet up with Will Manion, Captain Weldon. A whole bunch of us were there.

Q. I just have a question or two.

When you said you were on West Street, did you head west again now?

A. I mean, with the water pressure problem.

Q. When you picked up with all those other people --

A. We were on --

Q. -- where the majority of firemen wound up being.

A. Right. It was off the west side, West Street, Westside Highway, whatever it is, past the first bit of rubble, and you would have to --

Q. Towards the water is what I'm asking.

A. Right, it would be towards the water. It was north and towards the water. You had to walk through the rubble, and it was about, I don't know, 8 inches of water you had to wade through.

You had to wade through that and then go up

A. WALSH

and over. I don't know -- it wasn't the block with Chi Chi's on it. I think it was one of the blocks before that, but I'm not sure.

Q. All right. When you went up West Street, you went under the south foot bridge?

A. Right.

Q. Was this past there you are talking about?

A. Just a little, not much. It was just one of the those streets off.

Q. Liberty Street probably.

A. Pretty -- probably, yeah.

We also searched -- I'm sorry, but before we did that, we went to the Rector Street subway station and searched down there. We went down to the tunnel. I had forgotten about that.

We went down to make sure that everybody was out. Pretty much everybody was out. We met one TA worker who was coming up the stairs as we were going down, and we went through the tunnel to where the debris was, and it was piled high in the tunnel, and then we came all the way back.

That's when we walked to the command post and then over or whatever that -- I guess it was the command post at that time. I don't know what it was.

A. WALSH

Q. All those rigs you saw, you wouldn't know their locations? Near the foot bridge, whatever.

A. All of the rigs -- most of the rigs I saw were along West Street. Definitely, was it 113 I kept passing? I drank some of their water.

Then I saw -- as we got closer, I saw 226's rig, but I'm not going to remember where. I remember passing it, because it was my first company, so that's their rig. I thought they were okay, because they were far -- you know what I mean? I saw the rig. It wasn't -- I mean, the windows were blown out, but I thought oh, okay, maybe they're not in, but lots of -- a lot of crushed cars, a lot of crushed ambulances.

That day, I didn't see a lot of completely crushed vehicles, you know, windows blown out, dust all over the place, a side bashed in here, but the completely totalled ones I don't remember seeing that day. Like 219 I saw, and that was really -- had gone through the wringer, but it was okay, pumping. I don't remember -- when we saw Ladder 20, it was squashed.

Q. Approximately where did you see 219? You said they were pumping?

A. They were pumping -- they were pumping --

Q. Was it on West Street?

A. WALSH

A. It was right off West Street, right near -- I'm going to say it's close to the Palm Court, but I was a little turned around at that point. They were near that area somewhere.

Q. South of the foot bridge, one of those streets south of the foot bridge?

A. They were north of the south bridge.

Q. All right. That's fine.

And 20 was north of the south bridge?

A. Oh, yeah. 20 was underneath.

Q. If there is anything else you care to add --

A. Unfortunately, no. Three o'clock in the morning, I'll start remembering, but, I mean, that was pretty much the bulk of the day.

I remember searching the buildings. I remember we were told to search the buildings for structural problems or to make sure things were okay.

I remember going through in and around that area a lot for long periods of time, in and around the Palm Court, going through the Palm Court.

We were there till, I think, eight o'clock, 7:30 eight o'clock.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: If you don't have anything else, that concludes the interview.

A. WALSH

Thank you.

THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.

File No. 9110354

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN MORIBITO

Interview Date: December 12, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: The date is December 12, 2001. The time is 12:55 in the afternoon.

This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with John Moribito of Ladder Company 10 of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place at the quarters of Engine 4, Ladder 15 in the engine office regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman, Moribito, please tell me what happened in your own words.

A. On the morning of September 11, I arrived at Ladder 10, Engine 10's quarters at approximately eight a.m., and I relieved the chauffeur that was on duty the night before. I was scheduled to be the ladder company chauffeur that day.

At about quarter to nine, at 8:45, we were sitting in the kitchen enjoying a cup of coffee, and we heard what I describe as kind of a muffled boom, and it sounded like when a container truck rolls down the block and hits a pothole, and the container on the back of the truck rumbles.

The officer, Lieutenant Steve Harrell, who

J. MORIBITO

was the covering officer in Ladder 10 that day, looked across at me, and he asked me if that was normal for around that area. I said, "Yeah, it kind of sounded like a container truck."

When I finished my sentence, the house watchman ran in, and he apparently was very startled. He was very afraid, and he was yelling that a plane had just hit the trade center. A plane just hit the trade center. He repeated it twice.

We all jumped up from the table. We ran up to the front of our quarters out to the apparatus door, and the sky, which was a beautiful blue sky that September morning, had turned black. We could see up at the building. We couldn't tell at that point which building was involved with the crash, which one was on fire, but we could see smoke, and we could see debris falling from the building.

There was fire falling from the building. There were computers and pieces of desk. We noticed that there were also pieces of human being falling down from the sky and crashing in front of our quarters out on the street.

There were many people in the street right in front of the quarters that were startled. They were

J. MORIBITO

bleeding. Some were burnt. They were cowering in our house watch. We tried to pull as many of the people off the street as possible before we left quarters and brought them into the firehouse.

We jumped on the rig. We got our gear on. We pulled out of quarters. I had to be real careful, because people were running in front of the fire truck, and we couldn't really control them at that point.

Pulled out of quarters and very gingerly was trying to go across the street. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We proceeded to make a left turn down Liberty Street. I stopped initially in front of 2 World Trade Center, and everyone on the rig was yelling up at me that it was 1 World Trade Center that was hit.

At that point, there was a stalled Lincoln Town Car, livery car, that was in front of us, and there was a woman driver, and she couldn't get the car to move. She couldn't get it in gear. She was in shock. She was jumping up and down. Eventually, a

J. MORIBITO

police officer came over. He jumped in the car. He tried to move it for her. He wasn't able to move it, so I did have to ram the car, and I pushed it out of the way. I opened up Liberty Street in order for the other engine that was behind us, Engine 10, to get up the block.

I came to the end, to West Street, and I made a right turn onto West Street, and I was barreling down. As I was approaching 1 World Trade Center, there was a Chinese man in the middle of the street, and he had been burnt pretty badly. At that point, we didn't know how he was burnt, but he was burnt. He was lying in the second lane from the right in the middle of the street, and he was still alive.

As I approached him, he lifted his head up off the street to look at me, and I stopped my rig and positioned it in a way that I would block him out so that no one coming around me would actually run over him, because they couldn't see him at that point.

That's where the members disembarked off the rig. They all jumped off. I myself jumped off to tend to the gentleman that was in the street. Terry Rivera, who had just gotten off that morning and took the run in with us, ran up to me and he asked me if he should

J. MORIBITO

go into the building being that he didn't have a Scott pack on, and I told him to assist me with the gentleman that was in the street.

The rest of the company ran into the building. I had run over to a volunteer ambulance that had arrived at the scene at the time. At about the same time the ambulance arrived, Ladder 1 and Engine 7 was pulling up. It was very quick, within the first 30 seconds of our arrival at the building.

The ambulance had pulled up. We took the gentleman that was in the street. We wrapped him in a burn blanket. We actually wet him down with a water can, and we put him on the stretcher, and we actually put him in the back of the ambulance, and they took him away.

Then I proceeded into the lobby of the building. When I walked through the lobby, there was broken glass everywhere. There were also two people in the lobby, a gentleman who was already burned and was dead, and a female. She was nude. Her clothes had burnt away. Her skin was burnt away. She was still alive. She was trying to communicate. Her eyes were sealed shut. Her throat apparently was sealed. She couldn't really communicate. Within the next two

J. MORIBITO

minutes, she had perished right there. We never actually got her any assistance. We couldn't get her an ambulance, and we didn't get her out of there.

At that point, I heard my officer, Lieutenant Harrell, call down to the chauffeur, myself, and asked me to do a perimeter check on the building, so I ran into the courtyard between 1 World Trade Center and 2 World Trade Center, and I made my report that the south side of the tower had visible flames showing from it at approximately the 80th Floor.

At that point, I wasn't able to see the entire perimeter of the tower, but there was fire showing around the entire perimeter of the north tower, Tower No. 1.

Then I looked down, and there were people approaching me and asking me if they should evacuate the building. I said, "Absolutely. Evacuate both buildings, if you can. Get out while you can now."

I noticed in the courtyard that there were valises, suitcases, strewn about the courtyard. There were wallets everywhere, broken glass, and then I noticed that there were airplane tickets.

I started to get a picture of the size of the airplane that had hit the building. Up until then, we

J. MORIBITO

thought it was maybe a small two-seater plane, and now we were starting to get the idea that it was maybe a larger or a commercial airliner.

I also started to notice that there were what I thought was insulation or what I described as insulation. It was gray and pink, and it was all over the place, and it turned out that this was human flesh, people that had been blown apart from the impact or from the plane exploding itself, and I noticed that they were everywhere. They were all over the floor, all over the courtyard.

So I made that report to my officer, that I think this was a bigger plane than we had expected or what we thought it was initially.

I went back into the lobby. At that point, I had no idea where my company had gone. I know they went up the B staircase, but I didn't know what floor they were on, so I remained in the lobby and helped evacuate people that were now exiting the building.

I saw the chiefs. Chief Pfeifer from Battalion 1 come in. Along with him was the battalion aide, and the French filmmaker, who happened to be standing in the lobby at the time, and he was videotaping everything that was occurring.

J. MORIBITO

Later on, I started to see other companies come in. I saw Ladder 15, and I saw Engine 4. They walked past me. I don't know what building they had gone into. I saw members of 21 truck. I saw members that I had recognized the -- I believe it was the Division 3's aide, who I went to the academy with. His name was James Smagala. I saw him in the lobby. Chief Cashin.

At that point, I was helping evacuate. Police officers had come up to me and asked me if I knew the building. I said I had. They said, "Well, we don't want to send people out onto West Street because there are people jumping, and there's falling debris and glass." What was the best way to get them out of the building?

I suggested that we send them through the plaza area, which was actually underneath 1 and 2 World Trade Center, and we would send them down into the subways and help them evacuate through the 1 and 9 line, I believe, and they would come up on Chambers Street or on Church Street, but in any event, they would be further away from the building, and they would be underground, which I felt was safe.

So that's what we did. I was the first

J. MORIBITO

member in the evacuation line, and I was directing people through a revolving door from 1 World Trade Center into the plaza area. I describe it as an organized chaos. As afraid as they were, as fearful for their lives as they were, they listened to directions very well, and it actually made me feel proud that New Yorkers had come together the way they had and helped out one another, that no one ran out of the building just in fear of their own lives, but actually stopped and helped everyone along the way.

The sprinklers were going off in the lobby in the plaza. There was broken glass in the plaza. As people were exiting to get away from the building, some of them were running, and they would slip and fall, and they would get gashed wide open. They had major lacerations to the back of their head, to their back, to their lower torso. We were fortunate enough to have EMS nearby, and we put those people on stretchers almost immediately and got them out of the building immediately.

The majority of the people did listen to our directions, and they did slow down, and they were walking in a calm manner. We were able to get -- in my opinion, I counted approximately 3 or 4,000 people that

J. MORIBITO

had walked past us and evacuated into the lobby.

There were two gentleman from Fire Patrol No. 2, that were right on the other side of the revolving door where I had set up for the evacuation. After a couple of minutes, we heard -- I heard over the department radio, "Prepare for impact. A second plane is approaching the building."

At that point, we all looked at each other and realized that it was now a terrorist attack. There was no way that two planes could hit the building in such a short amount of time on such a clear, blue sky, clear day.

I felt the impact of the second plane. I felt the building shake. I saw the lights flicker. At that point, I started to get nervous and wonder whether or not the buildings would come down.

I approached the chiefs. The chiefs were assured by the engineers of the building that there was no way that the buildings would come down. They actually said that the buildings could take -- withstand ten airplanes hitting it, and there was no way that the buildings could come down.

I also saw Mike Hurley and James Corcoran -- I'm sorry, James Corrigan -- who were the fire safety

J. MORIBITO

directors at the World Trade Center, who I had met a couple of times before, and they were running around. They were trying to keep some organization and trying to give as much information to the chiefs as possible as to the structure of the building.

I went back to my post to help continue evacuate people. After I would guess it was about an hour, but seemed like just a few minutes, it seemed like people had stopped coming down. They stopped coming down off the escalators. People weren't using the elevators, and I had walked into 1 World Trade lobby from the plaza area to look to see if anybody else was coming down.

I noticed that some of the elevators had been blown out of their shafts. They came down and crashed out of the shaft. They were buckled, and I had noticed that there were people still in the elevators. I believe that they were at that point deceased.

Then I saw the lights in both buildings went out, and I heard the rumble. At that point, I didn't know what was happening, but 2 World Trade Center was collapsing.

I tried to get back to the doorway where I had just emerged from, and I saw the members of Fire

J. MORIBITO

Patrol 2 and some civilians and police officers get down on their hands and knees, and I saw them buried in rubble. I saw the debris fall on top of them and push them against the wall. They weren't able to get through the doorway where I was on the other side which was somewhat of a safe haven.

The building came down. The rush of wind lifted me up off the ground, and threw me about 30 feet back into the lobby of 1 World Trade Center. I got myself up. I scrambled back to the doorway. I felt that the only safety area that I had was trying to be underneath that enclosure, which was a marble and steel doorway.

After the building collapsed, I jumped up, realized that I was still alive, and now I tried to make my way out of the building. I did hear at that point the Fire Department pass alarms were going all around me, and what I could imagine to be about ten or fifteen voices, firemen that were exclaiming they were still alive, not to leave them behind, to come back and get them, that they were okay, that they were pinned, that they maybe had broken limbs, but that they were alive. They were covered underneath some debris. There was a lot of dust we couldn't see, but in any

J. MORIBITO

event, they were alive, and they were yelling for help.

I tried to look around briefly for somebody. I couldn't find anyone. I saw a couple of flashlights in the distance. I walked straight ahead. I ran into the elevators. The elevators were completely out of the shafts at this point. All the elevators -- I could see members were crushed in between them. I could see civilians were crushed in between the elevators.

I tried to make my way to the left of the elevators where the guard station was. There was debris from floor to ceiling at that point. I couldn't get through there. I made my way to the right of the elevators, which was underneath the escalator, and I saw -- I was following a gray patch on the wall, and then I saw a white patch. I realized that was a window.

I ran to the window. I stopped in the window. I took my flashlight off my helmet. I flashed it into the building, yelling out that this was a way out, that if anybody was alive, this was the way to go, follow the flashlight.

Approximately six firemen and two civilians had come out that window with me. At that point, I

J. MORIBITO

couldn't see which company they were with. They were covered in gray soot and ash. Their helmets were covered. I couldn't tell or determine who they were, but there were about six firemen and two civilians that came out that window.

We ran across West Street, which was at that point littered with debris, including beams and broken glass, but not to the point where West Street was covered. West Street was still fairly open that we could run across it.

When I got out there, I saw Engine 10, which was parked right in front of the building, had been hit by a beam, what I found out later to be 67 tons in weight, and it had actually completely demolished Engine 10. It was on top of it, and at that point, Engine 10 was crushed.

I also heard someone yelling for the Engine 10 chauffeur over the radio, and I stopped briefly by Engine 10 to look for the chauffeur to see if he was possibly there, if he was pinned. Maybe if he was hiding underneath the rig, I could have gotten him out of there, but after looking quickly around the rig, I didn't notice any Fire Department gear. I didn't see the chauffeur. I realized he must have gotten away.

J. MORIBITO

One of the female civilians that came out of the window with me kept falling. She'd run two or three steps, and she'd fall. I'd pick her up by the seat of her pants. I was throwing her in front of myself to try to keep her in front of me. She'd get up. She'd fall.

Not realizing it, but now thinking back, she had probably had a broken leg, if not two broken legs, and wasn't able to run, but I did manage to continue to throw her all the way across West Street and into the arms of an EMS worker, who put her on a stretcher and got her out of there immediately.

At that point, I started to run northwest. I dropped off my cylinder right at the center divider of West Street and started to run northwest away from the building towards the water, towards the Hudson River and towards where the rest of my company was yelling they were headed towards Stuyvesant High School.

After going about two or three blocks, I was far enough away from the smoke to turn around and see that what I thought had happened actually had happened, that No. 2 World Trade Center did completely collapse, and not until that moment -- not until that point did I realize that the trade center actually was down.

J. MORIBITO

After seeing that 2 World Trade Center had collapsed, I could see that it was a bad situation for 1 World Trade Center. I reported to the chief that there were maybe 40 or 50 members that were standing fast in that lobby, Chief Pfeifer, and he himself was in that lobby, and he got out of there, and he knew that there were a lot of the members in there.

I don't know at that point if anybody ever went back into the lobby of 1 to see if any of the members that were injured in there would have been able to get out of there, had they been able to get in there to help those people. I don't know if that occurred. But only after about 15 minutes and after running about two or three blocks away from the trade center, I started to see the top of 1 World Trade Center began to buckle, and at that point I thought the building was going to come down towards the north, and I wasn't far enough away at that point, and I needed to continue to run.

So I got back up with the rest of members from Ladder 10 and Engine 10, and we started to run further from the building, and then the building had come down upon itself, and at that point, we realized that now it was time to turn around and go back to the

J. MORIBITO

building to look for members that were possibly injured or pinned.

After going back to the building and regrouping, trying to report to chiefs to find out exactly how we should attack this, I had hooked up with members of Engine 10, Ladder 10 and other guys, and we grabbed some hose lines. We were trying to help extinguish some cars that were on fire, a couple of ambulances.

I quickly checked in the back of a ambulance to see if there was somebody maybe that was in there that had gotten pinned or was burning. We put out a couple of car fires.

We ran back to the building and then seemed like all day long we were running back and forth into the building and out of the building as other structures were possibly going to collapse, and which, in fact, after a couple of hours No. 7 World Trade Center did collapse.

So it was a continuous running back and forth and trying to help out as best we can looking for members, putting out fires, trying to make whatever kind of rescue efforts we can, try to get as many tools out of whatever rigs were close by, try to do some

J. MORIBITO

digging, still not knowing whether or not there were explosives in the cars surrounding the area, didn't really know whether or not there were more airplanes incoming, if the terrorist attack was actually over at that point.

The rest of the day, just trying to regroup with as many people as you can and try to get together and do some kind of effort to help the members.

Myself, knowing that there were people in the lobby of 1 World Trade, I entered through 6 World Trade to get into that lobby, only to find out that the lobby area was completely crushed. There was no way to even determine where it was at that point to try to figure out how to attack it or try to get in there and look for bodies or look for people.

That's pretty much it, and the next couple of days back and forth to the firehouse, trying to make the best effort we can to look underground, to look into the subways, to try to find people that we knew were alive. We had never come across anybody. We didn't come across anybody that was alive in any of the voids that we searched.

Then the next couple of days it became more and more organized and became a better effort to try to

J. MORIBITO

look for people, but, once again, never finding anybody, never coming across anyone that was alive from Engine 10 or Ladder 10.

Q. Are you finished?

A. Yes.

Q. A couple of questions.

A. Sure.

Q. After the first collapse, you said you heard people giving radio transmissions.

Did they identify themselves at all?

A. No, there was no identification given over the radio. I would imagine it almost sounded as if they were getting information off police radios, because they were giving me -- I also heard coming over the radio that they had heard that a plane just hit the Supreme Court building, a plane had hit the Pentagon, and this was coming over our radios.

Somebody, I would imagine, was out in the street and was maybe hearing something over the Police Department radio and was just making transmissions, whether they realized it was true or not.

Q. You said you hooked up with 10 and 10 later on and then by Stuyvesant.

Did most of those guys survive?

J. MORIBITO

A. We had -- I think there were about 14 guys that day. We had 11 guys on duty and three guys that were laying over that had just got off, and we lost five, five of those guys.

Q. When you hooked up with the other guys, did they say where they had been operating?

A. Yeah. Members of Engine 10 had made it up to about the 23rd Floor of the B stairwell in Tower 1. They had stopped there because someone was suffering from chest pains, and I believe it was a fireman that was suffering chest pains, and they stopped to assist him.

The officer, Lieutenant Atlas, continued up on his way, and I had heard the last report that he gave was on the 44th Floor. He said he was on the 44th Floor and continuing up, that he was going to try to get water on the fire.

At that point, Engine 10, the entire company wasn't with him. He was on his own, possibly with members of another company.

Officer of Ladder 10, the last I heard from him, he was on about the 31st Floor. That was the last radio transmission I heard from Ladder 10, and I would imagine that he continued up with Lieutenant Atlas,

J. MORIBITO

because they had gotten in at the same time.

Q. If you have anything else to add, you are welcome to do it. Otherwise, this is the end of the interview.

A. No, that's pretty much it. That's our adventure.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Thanks for your time.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

File No. 9110355

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREMAN JOHN OTTRANDO

Interview Date: December 14, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 17th, 2001. The time is 1100 hours. That's a.m. This is Battalion Chief Robert Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with John Ottrando, fireman first grade, of Engine Company 24 of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

The interview is taking place in the quarters of Engine 24 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Fireman Ottrando, tell me what happened to you on September 11th, 2001.

A. My company and I pulled up to Vesey and West Street, parked on that corner. My company got off the rig. They took their rollups. They went into the north tower. I stayed there. I hooked up to the standpipe system that was there.

After I hooked up, I went into the lobby of the north tower and I saw the command post being set up there. I noticed some people on the floor that were badly burned. One man was deceased, and there was a woman there that was very badly burned.

I went out to get EMS to come in to help her. They were very busy, and I just asked them for some blankets. I went back into the lobby of the north tower, and I covered the civilians up. I stayed with the woman until EMS came in, and I helped them take her away.

I saw Battalion 2 in the lobby of the north tower. After that I stayed there a few more minutes, and then I went out to my company. We were stretching hose. I saw the second plane hit the south tower.

Then we really didn't have anything to do because we were all hooked up and everything. There were people jumping everywhere, and we really couldn't help them.

I saw Lieutenant Giammona. He asked me if I had a spare mask. I told him I did not. Somebody had already taken it. I saw him go into the north tower. That was the last time I saw him. He was by himself, as far as I could tell.

I was outside, still playing with some hose, when the south tower fell. I could see debris falling. I saw the dust cloud coming towards me, and I took off and I went

behind a car on Vesey Street. Day turned to night, and I couldn't breathe that well.

So I felt my way north up West Street by sense of direction. Some women grabbed me and she threw me against the building and she was washing my eyes out.

Then I was on the corner of -- I was on West Street, north on West Street, and then the second tower fell. I never got back to my rig.

That's about it.

Q. Where did you go then?

A. Then I stayed north. I never went back south. I never went back downtown. I went to Broadway because they told me there was a command post over there. I couldn't find my company. I found them one at a time.

A couple of guys that were in my company that weren't on duty were there. I found them. I could not find 5 Truck at all. I was looking for them.

That's about it.

Q. That was it?

A. That was it.

Q. I just have a couple of questions. You

said you went down there with the company. Do you know what your assignment was, the first due? It was Engine 24.

A. Right.

Q. You were the chauffeur?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you on the second alarm assignment?

A. Second alarm, yes, second alarm.

Q. And when you went into the command post, you saw some chiefs and stuff.

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you know who the chiefs were?

A. I saw Chief Hayden, I saw the Commissioner, I saw Chief McGovern.

Q. This was in the north tower?

A. Lobby of the north tower.

Q. Chief McGovern?

A. Yes, and his aide.

Q. When you said you saw Battalion 2, that's who you meant?

A. Yes.

Q. Any other companies at the command post that you can remember?

A. I can't remember exactly. I saw companies come in. I saw 5 Truck go in. I remember seeing 5 Truck go in. I can't remember the numbers of the other companies coming in.

Q. And as far as chiefs, those guys --

A. Those are the chiefs I saw, yes.

Q. Like I said, you were with Engine Company 24.

A. Yes.

Q. Lieutenant Giammona that you mentioned, he was off duty, but he was one of the officers in Ladder 5 Truck that responded by himself?

A. Yes. He was off duty.

Q. Okay. Unless you can remember any other companies that were parked behind you --

A. I saw 7 Engine parked south of the north tower in the street on West Street. I can't remember other companies.

Q. When you said you were outside stretching hoses with your company, did they then subsequently go inside the building?

A. No. My company was in the building at that time, and I was being helped by Fireman Jimmy Miller, who was off duty and had come up.

He was helping me stretch the lines.

Q. Do you happen to know where 24 Engine went? Up B, A stair or anything like that?

A. I couldn't say for sure. I think it was B stair.

Q. So you weren't with them when they went to the command post and ended up getting an assignment?

A. No, no. I was preoccupied with helping those two civilians, so I really didn't notice where they went.

Q. Okay. Anybody else you can remember at the command post?

A. No. Those are the only people I remember seeing.

Q. Since you were outside, did you see them at any point set up a command post outside?

A. Outside, no.

Q. Okay. Anything else? If you don't have anything else, that's the end of the interview. Do you have anything to add?

A. No.

Q. Okay. Thanks a lot.

File No. 9110356

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD GANASSA

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 17th, 2001. The time is 3:02 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, New York City Fire Department, Safety Battalion, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER GANASSA: Edward Ganassa, Engine 312, Battalion 49, Division 14.

CHIEF BURNS: This interview is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you would, Ed, in your own words, just tell us what happened on that day.

A. Okay. I was working the Monday night and Tuesday day. On Tuesday morning, 9/11, the computer went off to respond to the staging area on Huntspoint Avenue and Vernon Boulevard.

We proceeded to the staging area. We lined up with a few other companies that were there. We stood there approximately 25 to 30 minutes. I'm getting the call to respond in to the Trade Center. I don't know the time.

We went through the Midtown Tunnel, following in a caravan with other rigs, and we stationed our rig on West Street. At that time

we got our Scott packs on and started walking with other firemen towards the north tower.

About five to ten minutes after arriving, I saw one to two jumpers -- two jumpers exactly jump off the tower, and about two to three minutes later, the tower fell down. We were covered with dust. We were not hit by any large debris.

After the dust settled, we found the 49 Battalion and his aide, the chief and his aide, and we assisted the companies in searching for firemen and civilians. We stayed there until approximately 11, 11:30 at night, and then we were told to respond back to our firehouse.

Q. When you went in, Ed, do you know approximately what your location was where you saw or heard the building about to come down?

A. We were at West Street, and there was a small pedestrian bridge. We were probably about 200 to 300 feet north of that bridge. There was a staging area, I believe. It was a secondary staging area.

Q. When the building started to come down, which way did you run?

A. Uptown, north.

Q. When you were the staging area, did you see any other units?

A. At the staging area? Where I parked the rig, there were many rigs there. I recognized the ones from our company: 262, 307, 263 I believe was there. At the staging area there were no rigs; it was just chiefs and Commissioners.

Q. And that staging area was north of the bridge?

A. Yeah, it should be just north of the bridge if I remember correctly.

Q. Did you guys ever come south of that or you stayed there waiting?

A. Not until after the collapse. After the collapse and the dust lifted slightly, then we proceeded south of there.

Q. Thanks.

CHIEF BURNS: That's the end of our interview. It's 3:06 p.m.

File No. 9110357

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL BEEHLER

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

M. BEEHLER

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 17, 2001. The time is 1616 hours. This is Battalion Chief Stephen King with the Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual: Firefighter Michael Beehler, Firefighter 6 grade from Ladder company 110, who had the irons position on September 11. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Mike, you can start whenever you want.

A. Okay. That morning I was sitting in the house watch at about quarter to nine, when a few Lieutenants or a few officers were out front. We had the apparatus doors open. We were just finishing checking out the rig and one of the Lieutenants from the field comm. unit had said that he saw smoke and he said wow, what is that over there. Do they have something going in Manhattan or is that just a compactor fire.

I was on the house watch and I said I don't know. Let me turn the radio on, so I went in and turned the radio on. With that I heard a second alarm being transmitted at the World Trade Center.

With that, I notified my officer, because we

M. BEEHLER

go on box 8031 to the World Trade Center on a second alarm or greater. So I let him know that we were probably going to be going. Went out and got geared up and came back into the office, turned the TV on and we saw what they were saying was a plane crash into the north tower.

With that, we were just waiting to get sent and we got sent about 3, 4 minutes after that. We all got on the rig. Went over with 31, Battalion 31 followed us. As we were going over, I remember looking out the window of the rig and seeing a lot of smoke and saying wow, this is something. I remember hearing over the radio that they had a lot of fire there and they had jumpers and what not.

As we got to Manhattan -- we went over the Brooklyn Bridge. As we got to Manhattan, there was a lot traffic, a lot of people on the road. We got pulled up. We had came down Broadway and as we got to Liberty Street, I believe -- yes, we got to Liberty Street and made the right off of Broadway on to Liberty and we were on Liberty between Broadway and I believe Church and we had gotten off the rig with Battalion 31. We were speaking to them on where we should go because we were assigned to the north tower.

M. BEEHLER

I remember just hearing an explosion that basically I can't describe the sound of. It was actually the second plane crashing in. We were on the side, we were on the south side of the south tower when it came down -- I mean when the plane crashed in. I just basically said to myself something is not right here. It didn't feel right to me. I told my boss, just I said to him this doesn't feel right. We don't belong here. He said yes, I know, come on.

As we looked up though, when it happened, alls we saw was a big ball of flames and the flames went away. We saw a lot of smoke and debris was heading everywhere. People were just running. People scattering like -- the best way to say it is like a scattering of roaches when you turn the lights on. People were going anywhere that they could.

We got back in the rig, we backed up on to Broadway, went up to, I believe it's Battery Park or wherever it was. We went down, made the next right, which was back on Church Street. We came back down on to Church Street. We parked the rig in front of, I think 5 World Trade Center it was. Looking on the map here.

We got out, grabbed all our stuff. I had the

M. BEEHLER

irons, I grabbed the irons, the bunny tool and we all grabbed extra cylinders and we started making our way up towards Vesey. We made it down to Vesey and on to West Street, walking into the northwest corner of the north tower. They had a mini command post set up, I believe it was from the First Division.

We walked in, Lieutenant Mera, the officer, he said, he told us to stand to the side while he went and got an assignment. We all put our stuff down. Engine 207, came in, followed us in and the guys that were working from the engine, the three guys that were on the back step came in with the officer. The officer went to the desk and they came over and joined us where we were standing.

We were only there for maybe about 2 minutes when Lieutenant Mera came over. He said come on, we are going up to the 21 floor. There are reports of people trapped there. We had a Battalion Chief with us. I don't know the Chief's name.

Q. Chief Picciotto?

A. I believe so. We all picked our stuff up. He said he thought there was a bank of elevators that were working. So we went up to the mezzanine, I believe it was. We went up the escalator to the

M. BEEHLER

mezzanine. There was a bank of elevators there that were still in service, so we took that up to, I believe the 15 or 16th floor. We got up and then we walked up to the 23 floor from there in the B staircase, I believe it was.

People were coming down. People were calm in the staircase, they didn't really seem too overanxious. They were saying god bless you, this and that. We made our way up to the 23 floor. We dropped our stuff that we didn't need. At that point I just put the irons with my (inaudible) for the can. We went back down to the 21 floor and we started just searching the 21st floor. All the doors were locked. We were forcing all the doors. There was nobody on the floor. We practically searched the entire floor. We hadn't found anybody.

There was one last section that we went to go search and as we went in there, two of us -- two guys went to the right and two guys went to the left. I was one of the guys that went to the left. It was like an office there where it was like a split office almost. I was by I guess the outer part of the building and I just remember feeling the building starting to shake and this tremendous tremendous like roar and I just

M. BEEHLER

-- I kind of didn't even notice it, but like out of the corner of my eye, I saw out of the building, I saw a shadow coming down.

At that point I thought it was the upper part of the north tower that had just basically like toppled over, fell off. I didn't actually see the building part go by me, because I think I was on the opposite side. But I just remember feeling this tremendous tremendous shake and hearing this, like, noise. Again I can't describe.

What I did was I ended up running out. I ran into the staircase where my officer and the rest of the guys that were with us at that time, we jumped into the staircase and nobody really knew what was going on. After that, everything had stopped. The boss told me and Artie Riccio, who was driving, to go check out the part where we just were down the hall a little bit, so the two of us went back down and we had searched the part where we had just been about 5 minutes prior to that.

All the windows in that area were all blown out. It was like a big office, it was a computer office. I don't know what they were doing there. But all the windows were blown out and dust was coming in.

M. BEEHLER

Again we just searched there, there was no structural damage at that point on the 21 floor. We made our way out and as we were making our way back down to the hallway where the officer was, I heard on the radio, a Chief come over the radio. I don't know his name.

He said this is Chief so and so. I personally am ordering everybody out of the building now. Anybody in the north tower get out now. Lieutenant Mera said to all of us, he said come on, we got to get out. He said make sure to stay together. We are all going to get out, we are all going to go down together. We are all going to get out together. Once we get out, we will decide where we are going to go. Once we get downstairs we will decide where we are going to go.

With that we went downstairs. There was another truck company ahead of us. What we did was we basically piggy backed towards where --

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Time is 1626 hours.

I'm stopping the interview.

The time is 1702 hours. We are restarting the interview, continuing the interview with Firefighter Beehler. Okay, Mike.

A. At the time when I heard the loud noise and

M. BEEHLER

felt the building shake, we all ended up back in the staircase after re-searching the one area. We had gotten the order to evacuate the building. Lieutenant Mera told us all to stay together and as we started making our way down, we, like I said, we piggy backed floors with another truck company, forcing each door on the way down. Like they took the odd floors, we took the even floors, to make sure there was nobody on that floor and make sure that everybody heard the evacuation order.

We got down to the 9th floor and from there down it was very congested. It felt like we waited on each landing for about 30 seconds to a minute, because the staircases were packed with members of the Fire Department that were evacuating. So you did get to 9, then you got down to 8-1/2. Felt like you waited another 30 seconds to a minute. Got down to 8 and continued to go down.

When we got down to the lobby I just remember seeing all the windows in the north tower on the lobby floor blown out and there was like dust and debris everywhere. I actually remember picking up a helmet, thinking it was a Chief's helmet, and I said to Lieutenant Mera, I said, wow, some Chief dropped his

M. BEEHLER

helmet here and as I picked it up, my fingers smudged a little piece of it off. I saw it was a fireman's helmet. The Chief came other over, took the helmet.

As we were walking out, we walked out the same place where we came in, and I remember seeing the board there by itself with nobody there. There was a guy actually standing outside the building telling us if it was safe or not to come out because he said there were jumpers coming down at that time.

He said come on, come on, go. We went out and we stopped right outside the building. We actually sat on 3 truck's bumper I remember just because a few friends of mine were in the company. I remember stopping and we all sat down and Pauly Hyland, who had the OV, said if this building comes down run up against this garage. We were under the foot bridge. He said run up against this garage, we might have a chance to live.

With that Lieutenant Mera turned to us and said come on, why don't we go down a little further. We all got up. We started walking. We were walking west on West Street, continued to go and as we kept on walking we stopped at a rig. I got some water.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Time is 1705 hours.

M. BEEHLER

I'm stopping this interview.

The time is 1706 hours. We are restarting the interview again.

A. We continued to walk west on West Street and we finally had stopped, I believe it was at engine 224's rig and we weren't there for more than 30 seconds when Paul Hyland, again, the OV said something to the effect of oh, my god, it's coming down, run for your lives. Turned around to see the north tower coming down. At this time I had just taken my mask off and I just laid it down. I went to grab my mask and as I went to grab it, 10 guys just caught me and just swept me up with them and I just started running, figuring maybe I could out run it.

I remember turning back around and seeing it right behind me and basically said this is it. I figured I was going to die right then and there. I put my head down and as I put my head down, I just started walking, I saw there was a mask laying in the middle of the street. I looked around, there was nobody around it. I just remember, I said, all right, I'm going to pick it up. I picked it up.

As I was putting it on my back, I got covered in the dust cloud. I went to put the mask on, I had

M. BEEHLER

turned the cylinder on. Couldn't see anything. I wasn't able to breathe. I just remember trying to put the mask on. The regulator face piece came apart and tried -- I was able to get the regulator and the face piece together. Took a hit -- took a hit breath of air.

At that point I was looking for a place to go because there was debris, nothing big coming down, because we were about a block, block and a half away but just to get someplace where it was safe because I didn't know what else was going to happen. I ended up finding an ambulance. I jumped into the ambulance. They brought me in. I stayed there until the dust cleared. Tried to get Lieutenant Mera on the radio, but there was a lot of radio traffic. Guys giving Maydays and everything like that.

I just started walking up West Street because I knew they were ahead of me. I finally saw them by Stuyvesant High School. We got together and there were 4 guys there. I was the fifth. Mike Brodbeck, who was detailed from the 210, he was the sixth guy. Lieutenant Mera knew he was all right. He was being treated by EMS because he hurt his shoulder, running into an ambulance or something.

M. BEEHLER

We just basically hung out there for a little while and as the day went on, we basically just sat around, waiting to get some more orders. I remember seeing a lot of guys coming in. At that point guys grabbed, they took some of our radios and they took some of the tools that we had left. They went up and they tried to, I guess do some searching and whatever they could do.

I think it was around like 6:00 later on that night, we all decided, all the guys from the house had come in and we found-- we had known at that point that 207 was unaccounted for so, basically we just said let's see if we can find them, find a rig, find something, find our rig, because we didn't know anything that was going on. This is including -- this was after 7 World Trade Center had collapsed also.

We went searching. We searched for about an hour and a half. We ended up finding our rig about a few blocks away from where we parked it. We had no luck finding 207 or 207's rig. Basically we just came back here and that was it. We went to the chart that we were on, 24 on, 24 off. We just went on with that.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: All right, Mike. It's 1710 hours. This interview is concluded.

File No. 9110359

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DEAN BELTRAMI

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 17, 2001. The time is 3:40 p.m.

I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, New York City Fire Department, safety battalion, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER BELTRAMI: Firefighter Dean Beltrami.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Engine Company 260 in regard to the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. If you would, Dean, just tell us in your own words what happened on that day.

A. We responded to the alarm. We responded to a staging area in Queens by the Midtown Tunnel.

When we got there, we waited for other units to arrive in the battalion. The battalion chief arrived. He said that we were going to wait until the tunnel was checked for bombs before we went through the tunnel. There was probably maybe close to a half hour wait there. Then we proceeded through the tunnel.

While crossing midtown, or I believe just when we were coming out of the tunnel, we heard reports of a collapse. I was thinking -- I personally thought it was, like, a couple of floors. I thought it was a bad thing, but I didn't hear a catastrophic collapse

Beltrami

over the department radio, so personally, I didn't know if it was a catastrophic collapse, or just a minor collapse or whatever.

After awhile, I got, I heard the word catastrophic collapses occurred, and then I realized that one building -- that would be the south tower -- came down, Building 2.

So we responded . We were coming across 34th Street. We got to the Westside Highway, proceeded south, around where I heard the -- there was a guy on the department radio on the rig screaming that he was trapped under a rig. It was extremely frantic screaming, and it kind of got you nervous. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This guy is screaming for his life, and they can't find him.

So then we proceeded down West Street and when I heard a handie-talkie report of Firefighter Kevin Shea, I knew Kevin Shea from another company that I worked at. Kevin Shea is missing. Immediately after I heard Kevin Shea is safe. He's in an ambulance.

There wasn't much other -- I wasn't hearing much handie-talkie reception otherwise, because I had the nozzle position. I didn't have a radio.

The chief had us park quite a distance away,

Beltrami

at least ten, maybe close to 15 blocks, in my opinion, away from the south tower. I'm sorry, Tower No. 1 on West Street, on Westside Highway, and I was thinking this is an awful long walk to go. How are we going to get down there. We grabbed roll-ups. We grabbed spare bottles.

We began to walk. Pretty much my whole battalion was walking down the Westside Highway together. When we got to about a block, say about a block and a half north of the north tower, in between Barclay and Vesey Street, we dropped our gear to get ready to enter the buildings, and the lieutenant and officers that were with my battalion proceeded to try to report in to the chief.

Just maybe about a minute had gone by, and somebody said, "Look, the building is starting to bulge." We looked up, and you could see the entire facade starting to buckle on the upper floors. Immediately nobody said anything. We just turned and ran as fast as we possibly could.

I could see that no heavy debris was going to hit me, but I still ran as fast as I could all the way to Stuyvesant High School, and I got to about -- right before I got to Stuyvesant High School, the cloud

Beltrami

caught up to me.

I continued to run at a slower speed until I was out of the cloud, stopped, because there was a north wind. I donned my mask and went back into the cloud to make sure we could see if we could regroup some of my members that were with me, and we went back into the cloud to see if we could find anybody that was hurt or -- and we proceeded to head back towards the buildings.

We got to within a hundred feet or so of where the north tower stood, and the chief ordered us back saying that there was -- I don't know the chief's name, but he ordered us back saying there was a gas main underneath us, and it could blow.

We proceeded to go back one block to that post. Then slowly but surely every two minutes or so when we started to regroup we were pulled back further, and further and further until we were behind -- until we were past Stuyvesant High School.

At that time, there was a bomb threat in Stuyvesant High School, and we evacuated that area and went further up West Street until we were a good distance away, probably -- I'm not sure of the street, which street it was on, but it was quite a distance

away.

Throughout the rest of the day, we weren't put back in to work. We were considered to have worked already, because we were covered in dust, and in the evening we got to do a little bit of work, but that was it, and then we were sent back to quarters.

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: That concludes the interview. Thanks, Dean.

The time is 3:45 p.m.

File No. 9110362

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER SALVATORE CHILLEMI

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 17th, 2001. The time is 12:25 p.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER CHILLEMI: Salvatore Chillemi.

CHIEF BURNS: -- from Engine 260. This is in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. If you would, Sal, just tell us in your own words what happened on that day.

A. We had eight or nine rigs, which I don't recall every rig that was there going down in the convoy down to the World Trade Center. We went down to West Street. I don't know the block that we stopped at. It was, let's say, eight blocks away from Vesey. We parked our rigs, and we were told to carry all the gear we can carry.

We walked down West Street towards the World Trade Center. When we got to somewhere between Barclay and Vesey, that's when tower -- tower two had come down before we got there. Tower one started to come down as we were between

Barclay and Vesey. The tower is coming down. We just dropped all our gear and just made an about face and ran for our lives. Basically that's what happened to us in that area that I can remember.

As we ran back on West Street, trying to get out of the danger zone, the cloud of dust, smoke and everything just covered us completely. I didn't get a chance to put my mask on at that point. I put it on after a few minutes as we were trying to get out of the area.

After the smoke lifted and cloud lifted, we all tried to look for each other, all our guys, because we all kind of scattered out of the way. We tried to regroup somewhere down on Warren Street, I believe it was.

The lieutenant and the rest of the guys in the company kind of regrouped and tried to walk back towards that area to get our gear and see if anybody needed any kind of help in that area.

Basically that's all I can remember at that point after that.

Q. Okay. Great.

CHIEF BURNS: That concludes our
interview.

Thanks, Sal.

File No. 9110363

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CHARLES GUTTMAN

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

C. GUTTMAN

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Today's date is December 17, 2001. The time is 1150 a.m. I'm Battalion Chief Robert Burns, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department.

Q. Conducting an interview with?

A. Firefighter Charles Guttman, Ladder 128.

Q. In regards to the events of September 11, 2001. Charles, if you would, in your own words, tell us what happened on that day.

A. We were held up at the Queens Midtown Tunnel and finally when we got released, the first tower, we heard reports of it falling as we were in the tunnel. We got to the scene, on the West Side Highway, quite a distance from the towers, started approaching the tower, got to about West and Vesey when the second tower came down, started coming down, in which I turned and ran away from the falling tower.

Q. Approaching the towers, were you coming from the north, the south?

A. This way, so what is that.

Q. Coming from the north?

A. Coming from the north, correct.

Q. After this tower collapsed did you run back to the north?

C. GUTTMAN

A. Back.

Q. When you were at the building did you see anybody or any units in particular?

A. We never got close to the building. We got to Vesey and West. I saw people jumping and it started to come down. I got covered with dust and then found the Lieutenant, all the members in the unit, they went into the rubble.

Q. Did you hear any handy talky transmissions prior to the building coming down or after it came down?

A. Negative. Not that I remember. I'm sure (inaudible). Some people running scared, police saying get out of here.

Q. Is that it?

BATTALION CHIEF BURNS: Charlie, thanks for the interview, the time is 11:51 a.m.

File No. 9110364

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FRANK VASKIS

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: It is December 17th, 2001. The time is 1335 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, Fireman Frank Vaskis of Ladder Company 15 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 15, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Vaskis, would you please tell me what happened to you on September 11th.

A. We were in the kitchen, I guess it was quarter to 9 on the 11th. An announcement came over the voice alarm saying there's been an explosion at the World Trade Center and get ready for your assignments.

At that point everybody who was in the kitchen went downstairs to the apparatus floor. Two of the guys who had been detailed the night before, Firefighter Oelschlager and Firefighter Larsen, were just coming back into quarters. They had pulled I think it was Firefighter

Larsen's van in front of the apparatus doors to unload their stuff before they parked across the street.

We got downstairs. We got on the rig. Everybody had their bunker gear on and waited for our assignment. We were down there maybe five minutes before it came over that they wanted us to go to One World Trade Center, there was an explosion.

The engine left before we did. We pulled out of quarters, and we headed down South Street. I had just taken over the position of chauffeur from Fireman Sica who was working the night tour and he was off; he was off the day tour.

We went down South Street. Lieutenant Leavey did not want to take the underpass because we had gotten stuck in there a few times in the past. So we were making our way around to West Street, and there was a backup.

I guess at this point the Police Department was guiding everybody from the tunnel into the underpass to get them off of the FDR instead of going up West Street. So there was a

bit of a delay with that.

Lieutenant Leavey was pretty upset about this. We got up as fast as we could with traffic. We finally were where West Street and the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel intersect. At that point the Police Department had those orange stanchions, directing traffic onto the FDR; not the small ones, the big ones that look like upside-down garbage cans.

Lieutenant Leavey told me not to stop, just to go through, just to take it and continue on. I did what he ordered. I hit one of the orange stanchions. At that point we heard an air leak.

He jumped out of the rig, and he tried to pull the stanchion from underneath the rig. It was wedged. He wasn't going to be able to do it. He picked up what looked like a black box, maybe four inches by six inches. I guess it was some type of a regulator for the front air brakes. He jumped back in, and he said, "Listen, just continue on, take it as far as it can go before the breaks lock."

I did what he ordered. We ended up on

West Street between Carlisle and Albany Street in front of a hotel before the brakes locked. I had it pulled over as far as I could. At that point people were streaming down West Street. There were several cops directing traffic.

Lieutenant Leavey told me that he was going to take the troops and walk down. He ordered me to stay with the rig, put the jacks down, pull out the thing, see if there was any way for me to stop the air leak. He said, "We're not going to be able to use this rig if we have no air. We're going to be stuck here."

I did what he ordered. The other guys were getting out. Firefighter Kopytko realized he didn't have his gloves with him. He asked if he could borrow mine. I told him, "Well, what am I going to do?" He said, "Well, by the time you finish what you're doing, there's going to be other engine companies. Just stop in and try to grab one from one of the other companies." So I gave him my gloves reluctantly.

I put the tormenters down and pulled out the stanchion. Now I had this brass coupling that was broken. I knew we had a toolbox on the

rig. I went over and grabbed the toolbox out. I thought that if I bypassed the broken fitting that I would be able to get some pressure. I took the one that was broken off, and the next elbow was too short; it wasn't wide enough to fit on.

While I was underneath checking out the situation, I heard a large crash, and one of the cops who was directing traffic said another plane hit. I heard more screaming, an initial rush of people by me, and the cops were saying that there was a third plane incoming.

I did what I could. I found a piece of heavy plastic that I thought might hold some air. I wedged it in in the broken valve. I put it back on, I tightened it up. I left the rig where it was. I figured after the job the guys would know where the rig was if I didn't move it. So I left it.

I got my bunker gear on, I got my Scott pack and my tool assignment, and I headed down. I stopped -- there were two engine companies parked in front of me. I don't remember the name of the engine companies. I checked both of them

for gloves. There were no gloves. I checked the chauffeur's seat. No gloves. I got to a third engine also. I don't remember which one it was. I found nothing in the back. I found a pair of gloves the chauffeur had put underneath the seat. They were a little small, but it was the only thing I had at the time.

I continued on. I walked down West Street, and I noticed that there were body parts on the ground in front of me. As I'm walking, I noticed a foot. I noticed one corner of West Street on the street before Liberty on the corner it looked like intestines. I couldn't make out what it was, actually.

I continued on. I realized that things were falling. I decided probably the best thing to do would be to walk under the overpass, south overpass, because I had heard that the command center was set up on the other side of West Street.

So I walked over underneath the overpass, and there was it seemed like ribbons of aluminum or whatever, the facade of the building, was trickling down. There were people screaming,

"Heads up. Watch for falling debris." When I looked up, I noticed somebody had jumped out of the building. There were rigs in front of me. I didn't actually see where that person landed.

So I'm still heading into One World Trade Center, which was our original assignment. I figured probably nothing had changed. I did not check in at the command center. I walked past it to the north overpass, and I cross back over West Street to the front of the building.

At that point the windows of the building had been blown out or taken out by the explosion. I don't know. The long, thin windows were gone, so I didn't use the actual entrance. I walked through the glass right where the fire command station was, and there was nobody there.

I headed towards the stairwell, and I got maybe about ten feet from the corner of the building, and I felt a wind. At first I didn't know what it was. I started to brace myself for it. It basically knocked me off my feet, onto my stomach, and I slid out of the building from where I had come. I was trying to stop myself, and I could tell that I went pretty much out if

not the same window that I had come in then one of the ones next to it.

I ended up about ten feet from the sidewalk in front of One World Trade Center. I crawled back in to what I thought was the threshold of the frame of the building. It was pitch-black. I fumbled around. I put my face piece on and turned my mask on. I was choking, choking dust.

So there I am. I'm on my knees for what seemed like, I don't know, 15 minutes. It was probably only about five minutes. It was pitch-black. It started to get gray, and it was just cloudy. I could make out where my helmet had blown off, and I could see where my tools lay further out in the street, maybe 20 feet, just outside the curb.

As the dust cleared, I made my way out. I found my helmet, picked up my tools, and I headed back into the building. I'm back towards the corner of the building, just about to get to the staircase, and the door opens and there are 10 or 12 civilians and they're all disoriented: "Here, this is the lobby. This is the lobby.

Now where do we go?" They're heading towards the main exit.

When I was outside picking up my helmet, I realized that that was where the -- I looked up at the Vista Hotel, and I noticed that there was a huge V chunk taken out of it. At that point I believe that the top of One World Trade Center had collapsed and fallen into the street. That's what I felt had happened.

In any event, that debris was blocking the main exit for the building. I told them that they shouldn't go that way; they should head out one of the windows where I had gone out. I said, "Stick close to the building and make your way up West Street and keep going."

When I knew that they had some idea where they were going, I headed back into the stairwell, when the urgent message came over to have all firefighters leave the building. They were going to form back up at Murray Street and West Street.

So I did that. I headed out. I actually followed them up West Street. When I got to Murray Street, we heard another loud

rumbling, and I looked back and saw a cloud of dust. That was I guess when one fell. From that time we just ran up West Street. We stopped in front of Stuyvesant High School, and we just got there just as the dust cloud made it to us.

We were in Stuyvesant maybe ten minutes. I came out. I still couldn't see that the building was gone. It looked like maybe the top half of it was gone. There was a lot of smoke; there was a lot of dust.

They started another whatchamucallit point at Chambers Street where they were letting companies go in. At that point I guess I ran into the engine chauffeur from 4 Engine, Bobby Humphrey, and he said, "Listen, just stay together." I told him what happened to me, and he told me what happened to him.

We ran into another group of two firefighters, one of the guys who had been relieved and another fireman who had been detailed but hadn't left yet before the run came in.

So the four of us hooked up. I remember him trying to raise Engine 4, as I was

trying to raise Ladder 15. They were not allowing anybody to go back in without supervision. We didn't have an officer with us.

That's really it. We stayed there. I think we spoke to three different chiefs. We told them that we had tried to contact our companies and they were missing. We told them the names of the guys who were working in our companies that day, three separate times: probably one right after we met up, the second one was maybe an hour later, and the third one was -- they had set up a table outside of Stuyvesant High School. That was the third time we were there.

We were there when Seven World Trade Center collapsed. I guess when we got back to the firehouse it must have been 10, 10:30, 11.

Q. Good. I just have one or two questions.

You say you were going to the stairs when you got into the Trade Center.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember which stairs you were heading towards?

A. I was heading towards the core. I never actually --

Q. Looked at any numbers?

A. Yeah, I never got that.

Q. So you wouldn't know what your company went up?

When you were in the lobby at any point, before, during, after, you didn't see any other Fire Department personnel?

A. I did not, no.

Q. So you hooked up with Humphrey sometime after the second tower collapsed?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Unless you have something else you can think of, that concludes the interview. I thank you for your time.

A. Sure.

File No. 9110365

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER HOWIE SCOTT

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 17th, 2001. The time is 1610. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Howie Scott of Squad 18 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place at the quarters of Ladder 20 in regards to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Scott, would you tell me what happened to you on September 11th?

A. September 11 started out -- I worked the night tour from the previous night before and was relieved by Manny Mojica as a chauffeur. I went upstairs, took a shower and was in the shower when the whole incident started to unfold.

I went into the locker room to hear over the department radio all the stuff that was going on. I threw on a pair of shorts and went downstairs to see what was actually happening.

I looked down south of Lafayette Street, saw the smoking tower, along with Tim Haskell and a few other members of Ladder 20. Timmy and I spoke of getting down there via the

hazmat bread truck, that's what we call it, the second piece. We saw that it was still in the second bay. I told Tim I'll be right back, I'm going to go get my shirt, some socks, grab my gear and we'll be ready to roll.

This was after the second plane hit the building that we decided, "All right, we're going down there, this is what we're going to do."

Anyhow, I ran upstairs, got my stuff, went to the rack, got my gear, came out to the front and Timmy and a few of the members of Ladder 20 had jumped on the bread truck and left. They were already gone.

I started looking around, because they had mentioned something about fire marshals were going to give them a ride down. I saw a fire marshal, and he said yeah, no problem, jump in the car.

As I'm getting my stuff, picking up my stuff and throwing it in the trunk, I see John Ceriello biking up the road. He's coming over from Brooklyn. I yelled down to him, "Hurry up. We've got a ride." So he peddled up, ran in, got his stuff, threw it in the trunk, and we went

down to the scene.

We pulled up on West Street I would say north of the north walkway, just to get an idea of the location. We got out of the car and put our gear on. We proceeded south down West Street under the north walkway and saw to our right in front of the financial building there was a command post over there that included Chief Ganci, Chief Downey, Mayor Giuliani, Bill Feehan and Tom Von Essen, the Commissioner. They were in conference about something. We caught Chief Downey's eye, and he kind of gave us the high sign to go find a SOC company.

So as we scooted away from there, we noticed that Squad 288 and Rescue 4 were coming across West Street. They went into the lobby of the financial building. I think it was One World Financial building. We informed the officer of 288 that we were going to join up with them with Lieutenant Kerwin. I believe he even put our names on his BF4.

Anyhow, they were taking a quick blow, sizing up what they were going to want to do next, get a little drink of water. Everybody

knew we were in for a long haul here.

In the meantime John and I kind of kept reminding each other: Hey, we don't have anything as far as tools, radios, air, whatever. So before we get committed to anything let's try and at the very least get some air.

They started to make their move back across West Street. We informed them that we would catch back up with them. I believe they were on their way into the lobby of tower two.

Anyhow, with the abundance of rigs right out in front on West Street there, we figured no problem, we'll just grab an extra mask from somebody, only to find out later that that was a big problem. There were no masks to be found.

We were hitting rig to rig, proceeding pretty much north on West Street until we saw the Hazmat 1 rig. We went over to there. The resource guy that's usually in the rig, he was still there. He came out and hooked us up with a couple of masks. We even changed out the bottles to one-hour cylinders.

In the meantime we picked up this other

guy, Phil. I don't remember his last name, but I remember he was an EMS worker there. I guess now he's over with the Fire Department. Anyhow, he joined in with us.

We started our walk down West Street towards the buildings, and I ran into Mike Macko from Ladder 8 and yelled up to John Ceriello -- I told John, "Hey, wait up. Let's wait for this guy. He's a senior guy in Ladder 8. He knows these buildings like the back of his hand. It probably would be advantageous, being as we don't have any radios or anything."

So I pointed Mike over to the hazmat rig. He also got a mask and I think also put on a one-hour cylinder, buckled up, and we were on our way.

As we proceeded back down West Street now, John was a little up ahead of us. I don't exactly remember how much further. We just made our turn to go in towards the lobby of tower two. For whatever reason, I just happened to look up and saw the whole thing coming down, pancaking down, and the explosion, blowing out about halfway up.

I yelled up to John -- I used a couple of expletives and said, "It's coming down, run, let's go." So we about-faced. In my mind I was saying north walkway, let's get under that, and dove under that. I probably fell short of that and kind of crawled. Anyhow, I did get under that. I believe I smashed into some sort of mask service rig.

I remember looking back and noticing that big mushroom cloud just roaring at us like a freight train. I quick scrambled and threw the cylinder on and threw the mask on my face and started crawling, which I'm figuring up West Street.

Now I decide, all right, let me get on my feet and make a move here. So I got on my feet and I start moving. I run right smack into a plate glass window, fall back, get back up. I don't know what building exactly, but there are some employees coming out of this particular building. It's on the other side of West Street. I just kept pushing them on: Go, go, keep going, don't look back, don't breathe even, just go.

Again I pretty much thought I was

proceeding up West Street, and in actuality I was proceeding west down I guess Vesey Street and ended up by the Hudson River, which I guess worked out in the sense of that all the boats were coming over from Hoboken now, all these ferries, and I got involved in just chucking people onto these boats. I even tried to make one boat like an ambulatory boat. Anybody that was banged up, I got them on just one boat and got them out of there, and the other boats we were just moving people on.

In the meantime, not really knowing what was going on back at the towers, because, again, I had no radio. I'm now separated from John and the guy Phil. Out of nowhere I see Mike Macko. Mike's crying. He's all upset. I get him calmed down.

We proceed now to go north on one of those streets in like Battery Park City, I guess, over there, and then swing around back towards West Street and end up back on West Street, north of the north walkway.

We ran into Pat Kelly from my company, Squad 18, who was in the tower when it came --

I'm trying to remember where he was. That's hazy, so I'm not going to go with that. I don't know whether it was after the first building or the second building came down I ended up running into Pat Kelly.

Anyhow, we start our descent back towards the building, because obviously there's lots of maydays and stuff going around. We get to just about the north walkway, about to go underneath, and the second one came down.

Again, a quick retreat back up. This one was, as far as I was concerned, the big one. The first one you had a chance to make a move, I felt, especially us. You may not have made the right move, but you had a chance, because it seemed like it pancaked down and that delayed the whole process, where the second one just seemed like it just opened up all over the place.

After that I was sitting on one of the medians at West Street just waiting for that smoke cloud to lift so we could see what the heck we're going to do next. Obviously it seemed like it was three hours we were waiting. It was probably not all that much time. Obviously some

officers were trying to get control of the situation.

But in looking at it later on, our position where we were, we were pretty much out of the picture at that point because all the devastation came that way, where I was, whereas any kind of rescue effort or any kind of stuff like that was I guess able to be done from, I'd say, the Liberty Street and Greenwich Street side, totally opposite from us.

But we did end up eventually crawling under that north walkway, which had collapsed and which was held up on either end. We were able to get under that, get up on the pile. Then I got involved with -- we found Pete Ganci. I was involved in that recovery.

I then ended up getting moved away -- I know I'm skipping some parts because the whole Pat Kelly thing is in there where we went to look for his mask and decided the heck with it, because that put us right by where building seven was, and Captain Verraile from 24 Engine said, "Hey, let's just back everything off here because this building is coming down." So we took all

the hose, equipment, everything that we could get our hands on and pulled it out of the collapse zone, so to speak.

Then later on we ended up in the financial building, the lobby, again. They wanted to get some sort of command post going in there. There's a lot of stuff that's all real hazy at this point.

I took a blow for a while. Then of course at that point every fireman on the job was there. I remember talking to my captain and trying to tell him where his father might have been on our way down.

That's pretty much it.

Q. Okay. Just a couple questions. As you said at the end, maybe where Chief Downey was. The first time you saw him was at the command post. You didn't see him go anywhere else?

A. Right. That's what I wanted to get, because while we were waiting on West Street, Captain Downey now reported in, just like everybody else was getting there. Everybody is like throwing stuff at him, pointing and throwing. You could see in a whirlwind not

knowing what was going on.

I kind of got his attention, pulled him aside and kind of specifically said, "Hey, Cap, look, this is what happened as far as your father goes with --" Okay, the rampway going into the garage of the financial building, that's where they were originally, meaning the five guys I told you.

If they made a move after the first building came down, I don't know. But that's where originally he was. When we saw them was right before the first building came down. So how much time elapsed there is probably not that great amount of time. So I don't know where he would have moved to.

John and myself walked around the whole rest of the day thinking each other was dead. It wasn't until 8 or 9:00 at night when we were in the lobby of that financial building getting some tables and chairs together so people can sit down and map some stuff out, and John comes walking around. We're both like, "What are you doing?" That was a relief to see him, and I'm sure he felt the same.

A lot of gray areas there. Like I said, the whole Pat Kelly thing, he was with us. A couple of the SOC battalion aides were outside that were with Chief Kasper and Chief Paolillo. Those two aides were out on the street with us. They ended up -- from what I'm gathering is they all got caught up in the same swoosh, so to speak, and got chucked this way and made it out, whereas anybody that got chucked that way didn't make it.

Q. Did they say where they were operating?

A. The 8th.

Q. No.

A. I'm sure they know. I just don't remember what they said. I'm sure they remember.

Q. If you don't have anything else, that concludes the interview?

A. Okay.

Q. Thanks for your time.

A. No problem.

File No. 9110366

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN CERIELLO

Interview Date: December 17, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 17th, 2001. The time is 1540 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with John Ceriello of Squad 18 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 20 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. John, could you please tell me what happened to you on September 11th.

A. I first saw on TV, I believe CNN, that the north tower was on fire. I was not aware of a plane hitting it at that point. Just looking like a high-rise fire, I decided that even though I was off duty that it would be a good idea for me to at least go into the firehouse and see if there was going to be any need of my assistance there.

So thinking that it was just prior to 9:00 there would be a ton of traffic, I jumped on my bicycle. I live in Carroll Gardens. I rode over the Brooklyn Bridge. When I was roughly in the middle of the span, there was a massive

explosion on the south tower.

Again I didn't see a plane or anything, so I didn't know it was a plane that hit the tower. I think in my mind I just thought there was a massive explosion on one of the upper floors and now you had a real bad fire. Obviously I figured I would be needed.

So I continued to Lafayette Street where Ladder 20 and Squad 18 are housed right now while our building is under construction. When I arrived, at the apparatus door was Howie Scott, another fireman from Squad 18, who was waiting for me. There were two fire marshals. I do not remember their names. They had a car fired up and waiting to take us down there.

So I quickly grabbed my gear. I remember grabbing a bottle of water, jumped in the back of their car and off we went. I believe we shot down to Canal, over to West Street, and down West Street.

En route you obviously could hear and I was informed that a small plane had hit the north tower and that a second plane had hit the south tower. At that point I think, knowing that it

was a clear blue sky, we knew something was up. I can't say that I thought it was terrorists right off the bat, but you knew something was going on that shouldn't be going on.

I didn't have my bunker gear on at that point, I remember, because I was just thinking of a high-rise fire, we're going to climb a lot of stairs, keep cool and try to save your energy in a sense.

So we quickly went down West Street and asked where the command post was. The command post was set up in the parking entrance to the American Express building across the street from the north tower, just south of the north walkway.

As we approached the command post, I noticed Chief Ray Downey at the command post. Being the SOC chief, I then asked him, "Chief, what do you want to do?" He told me and Howie to hook up with the next SOC units that came in and go to work.

So we donned all our equipment, and within seconds I believe 288 with Lieutenant Kerwin and Rescue 4 with Lieutenant Dowdell arrived at that command post.

We then all proceeded to go into the lobby of the American Express building, again right across the street from the north tower and just adjacent to the command post, and just did a little staging area.

The reason I believe we went into the lobby is there was debris falling around everywhere and swirling. I think just as a second form of protection if -- I guess the possibility of maybe a third plane or something coming in, the officer thought that was a good idea.

So we went into that lobby, and everybody was calm and cool. A couple guys I remember went to the bathroom and got some water. We just discussed the fact that we were going to go in through the south tower, try to go to the upper floors and help extinguish the fire or evacuate the people.

At that point Lieutenant Kerwin wrote my name on his BF4 as well as Howie Scott's name. I informed him that we did not have masks, and he asked me to get masks and come back to the lobby. If they were not in the lobby of the American

Express building, then they would be in the lobby of the south tower to meet us there. 10-4.

Howie and I left the American Express building and then proceeded to check rigs that were all in front of the north tower on West Street, moving north until we got to Vesey and West.

We found Hazmat 1 there, and Tony -- I cannot pronounce -- it starts with a C. I think it's Castagna or something to that effect. He was a member of Hazmat 1. He was there. I asked him if they had masks. He said yes.

At that point we donned half our cylinders. It was myself, Howie Scott, a firefighter from Ladder 8 and then a proby who originally was in 35 Truck who now I think is in hazmat, Phil Latimer. We donned half our cylinders.

At that point Tony from Hazmat 1 mentioned that he has our bottles and asked if we would like to switch over to our bottles, which we thought would be a good idea. So we took a minute and a half to two minutes to switch our cylinders.

We got all that, grabbed some tools and headed up West Street in the northbound lanes of West Street. We walked underneath the north walkway. When we got about 50 feet past that, Howie Scott looked up and said, "Oh, shit." I then looked up and saw the whole top of the building beginning to come down.

Then at that point we all ran north. I got underneath the north walkway, got behind a blue van, and everything went to hell, went to darkness.

Howie -- I didn't know where he was. I tried to locate him quickly and could not find him. Then I donned my face piece, because you couldn't breathe. I began to walk north and fell over something. I don't know what it was. I began to crawl, and what ended up happening was I crawled in a circle back towards the south tower, thinking I was heading north.

When the dust settled, I saw Ray Downey standing on West Street. I believe at that point we were in between the north and the south tower. The south tower was down. You really couldn't tell it was completely down, but you could tell

most of it wasn't there. I again approached him and asked him what he wanted to do. He said at this point you've got to do what you can do. He was trying to get the command post to move north.

Chief Feehan was with him and Chief Ganci. Chief Ganci -- actually Chief Feehan asked me to go with I believe it was Chief Fuentes, Al Fuentes. Is he is captain or a chief? I'm not sure.

Q. I think he's a chief.

A. Anyway, he asked us to do a primary search of the parking garage because everyone at the command post dove into the parking garage when the south tower came down.

So we went in there. We did a quick primary. We went in through the building. You couldn't get down there through where the driveways were; you had to go in through the building. We got down there, did a quick primary, we came back out onto West Street.

At that point Chief Ganci told us that we have a mayday of a fireman down at Liberty and West. Then Chief Feehan told me to take that proby, Phil Latimer, who I was with earlier but I

had gotten separated from and was with again. He said to do that assignment.

At that point we took off climbing over debris and whatnot on West Street. We passed a black woman with a broken leg with a firefighter on the sidewalk. We told them to stay put, that someone would come get them. We proceeded to Liberty and West, trying to ascertain from some of the firemen that were there if they had seen anybody or heard anyone. They said no.

We started up onto the pile when we just heard a horrific rumbling coming, and we knew the north tower was coming down. I then proceeded to run under the south walkway and dove into an ambulance. Again the same thing happened. Everything went to nighttime. The dust cleared. I donned my face piece, climbed out and headed to the water.

So basically that's who and what I remember. Some of the members that I saw from 288 and Rescue 4 were Joey Hunter, Ronnie Gies, Bronco Pearsall and John Ielpi. We all just briefly talked.

When we were in the American Express

building, we did see some people jumping and whatnot. We knew we had a bad scene on our hands.

For the most part that's who I remember seeing, in that particular order. After that, the rest of the day was spent in lousy attempts at trying to locate victims. That's basically all I can really say. It was just a lot of mass confusion. We just tried to do the best we could.

I basically operated on West and Liberty until about 1:00 in the morning. I never really went much up Liberty, and I never really went much north on West Street. I stayed in that quadrant right by what was the Marriott Hotel, making entrances and then running out because the buildings were collapsing and going back in, all that stuff.

That's basically the members I saw prior to the buildings coming down.

Q. Okay. First if that's all you have, I have a couple quick questions.

When you first reported in to the command post, you saw Chief Downey. Was anybody

else there, companies?

A. Yes. There were a lot of firemen staged, standing there. I cannot say that I actually recognized anyone.

Q. So you wouldn't know if Chief Downey or whoever was there was sending them any particular places?

A. No, no. I never even looked at our coffee table and clipboard at the command post.

Q. When you saw the apparatus, any apparatus numbers you can remember and where they were parked?

A. Yeah, I remember Rescue 1, obviously, right under the north walkway, the high-rise unit 3 from Engine 3, the high-rise unit. I remember rifling through that truck looking for tools and cylinders; a number of different engine companies, thinking the chauffeur's mask would be available.

But I cannot say exactly which engine companies. I believe Ladder 3 was right there. I think 18 was right there. Ladder 18 was right there. That's about it. I know the information on the buildings said West Street, so I think a

lot of units came down that way.

Q. When you say 288 and Rescue 4, they were basically at the staging area that you saw them? They weren't on any particular assignment in the building?

A. No, when I asked Chief Downey what to do, he said hook up with the next SOC units. Within a short period of time, 30 seconds, maybe to a minute, they walked up across West Street. I did forget one thing. So they walked across West Street. Then we all, as a group, went into that American Express building to stage.

What I do remember and I forgot to tell you is as we were checking the high-rise unit from Engine 3, I remember every maybe 30 seconds I would turn around and look towards the American Express building, trying to see if Rescue 4 and 288 were leaving that building.

At some time as I was making my way north on West Street, I did see them leave that lobby and do a single file and heading straight towards I would say it was the Marriott Hotel, heading towards the south tower.

Where they entered the building to get

into the lobby, say, that I can't answer. I didn't see at that point where they went in. But I do remember them walking in a single file across West Street on a diagonal, heading right towards the south tower.

Q. And that's who you were supposed to hook up with?

A. Yes.

Q. They were probably going to tower two?

A. Yes, I would say definitely. They're finding those guys there now. Absolutely.

Q. That's good. If you don't have anything else, that concludes the interview.

A. I don't think so. Any information that I can think of now, that's it.

Q. Okay. Thanks for your time.

A. Thanks, Chief.

File No. 9110374

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PAUL HYLAND

Interview Date: December 20, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

P. HYLAND

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 20th, 2001, the time is 1400 hours, and this is Battalion Chief Stephen King from the Safety Battalion, FDNY. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter 1st Grade Paul Hyland from Ladder Company 110, who was the OBN man on September 11th. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Paul, you can start whenever you'd like.

A. It's Paul Hyland from Ladder 110. It was about five or ten to 9:00 in the morning when we got the run to respond to Manhattan for a possible 1076. From actually the headquarters I could see the smoke coming over Manhattan going into Brooklyn.

Jumped on the rig going over the Brooklyn Bridge. That's when we got our first sight of the World Trade Center burning and, as we were actually crossing over, reports of someone from I guess -- because we had flipped over to radio transmissions and we had confirmed people jumping and we had perfect sight and actually we were looking to see what was going on, and this was going to be a fucked up job.

Going over the bridge, then we're trying to make our way down there. Went down Broadway. People

P. HYLAND

running and trying to get out of the area. Very difficult, hard traffic. Went down Liberty Street. We were actually looking -- we were trying to figure out exactly the position of where we had to put the rig because they wanted us down, I guess, it was really on West Street and Vesey, and it turned out we had stopped at Chambers and Liberty and we were waiting there because there were thousands of people and everybody was filming and just couldn't get across and we're trying to figure out, and then there was a gigantic explosion.

I had the OB and I looked up and I just saw the top of World Trade Center go up like a lit candle. It just everything just lit up and I thought it was maybe a secondary explosion, because if you looked from where we were, they're twins, so you're going to picture the second -- I didn't see the plane go in and I thought it was just a secondary explosion in the same tower, and everything just came down on the street. It was just raining steel. We said we're not going that way. So we were going to back up and we had to go down to Broadway. We ended up coming back. We were on Vesey and Liberty again. So we went back up and landed up parking the rig at Vesey and, I guess, Vesey and what

P. HYLAND

street was that?

(Pause.)

A. I guess Vesey and the Millenium Hotel. Church Street. I'm sorry. Church and Vesey. We were coming across and we walked down. We had to go down to the command center. We carried all our tools, the bottles, everything, and as we're walking down, part of the plane engine was sitting right in the street, still burning. I said, look, this is the plane.

That was the other thing. Another engine company, as we were marching, did shoot right down Liberty Street with all the debris going right there. I thought they were crazy. I had no idea. I can't remember what engine company it was, but they shot right across.

So we ended going around to West Street. Lieutenant Mera, the lieutenant for that day, I guess he saw a command station, command headquarters right inside the north tower, which is Tower 1?

Q. One?

A. We went in, busted through one of the windows, opened up, made like a door. I can't recall the fire companies who were there, but we responded there. We were waiting. We knew we were going to be

P. HYLAND

going up and it was a staging area for us. So I stood over by the -- I said let's get over by the elevator banks, put all our stuff down. Our Engine, 207, all came over with us. We were just sitting there talking, watching what was going on, and Lieutenant Mera came back to us and he said that we've got to respond up to the 21st floor, that there are people trapped. I'm not sure of the Chief that was with us who was assigned to us, maybe if you said his name, but I can't recall, and I think we had a maintenance guy with us at the time.

We were walking around. We walked to the back. I guess we were walking east inside the building, which was towards Vesey Street, right? Yes, where they had that mezzanine, they had an escalator coming down. There were just hundreds and hundreds of people just coming down at that point. The maintenance guy said I think the elevators are working, or it was the Chief said it. The Chief went around and says take a look at some of the elevators. I think we had a maintenance guy with us at the time. He said these low-rise are working, it will get you up to 16.

We said, well, this is not a normal procedure. We tried the firemen's service, brought the elevators down, put it in firemen's service, and about

P. HYLAND

all of us got into the elevator. It was a little unsettling. We went up I think a couple floors. We stopped and opened up. It opened. So we went up to 16, which was great because, walking 16 flights, we wouldn't be able to operate.

We got to the floor, went into the staircase, I think it was staircase C. It was the one right there. It was on the south side or west side. We went out and there were just people coming, constant amount of people, just a steady flow, but we couldn't attack with the steady flow of people. I mean, the staircases weren't that wide. We were shoulder to shoulder with these people with tools, we're banging them, telling them to step aside, and they didn't understand. They're just panicking. It was a nightmare.

So we got up to 23rd and they were going to try and clear that stairway out and make it an attack staircase. We actually had the people come out of the staircase and walk down to the other one and we were going to make them go down this one and make this the firemen's staircase so we could come up. We dropped our stuff on the 23rd and then Lieutenant Mera said down on the 21st we have people trapped.

We get down to the 21st floor. Me and Artie

P. HYLAND

Riccio from Ladder 119, we took the south end of the building. We split up. We paired off. Lieutenant Mera, Mike Beehler and Dave Sandvik took the north end of the building. We made our way around. There was no smoke. It was empty, but we were checking doors, forcing all the offices. We went around popping doors, popping doors, popping doors, all the way around, just anybody in there? Nothing. We were all getting very overheated and I have to say I took -- one of these offices were very expensive. I took a pitcher of water and just drank it right there, me and Artie, and then we got back. One of the doors we forced was like a water cooler -- it was microwaves and coffee pots and they had water and stuff.

So we got back to the other attack staircase, which was in the center of the building. We were all sitting. We were just waiting there for a few minutes, and we said we were going to go up to the next floor, and as we were waiting, everybody is sweating and hot and getting dehydrated. I told my officer, Wayne, I said, listen, I know where I can get some water. I said it's right over here. It's just down and to the back. I says I'm just going to pick up the cooler and bring it into the staircase so everybody gets water.

P. HYLAND

So he says don't go far. I says I'm going to put my mask right here. I'll just put my mask down.

I walk down and I make a left. Now I'm about 20 to 25 feet from the windows and the building starts to shake, and I look out and I'm just seeing all the steel from the south tower coming down right in front of my face, just all the steel, I mean, everything. I thought it was our building going down. So I just ran back, and the guys thought I was Derek Jeeter because I scooped up my mask, ran into the staircase, we donned our masks and we just stood there and the building shook and we just huddled like children.

It shook. We took about a minute or so, that's all I recall, a minute or two, then it stops. Everything was quiet. Then we went back out of the stairs. All the sheetrock, all the ceilings had come down in the building, guys were coming running back in. I think Dave and Artie said the windows were blown out and the wind blew through the -- lucky they didn't get sucked out. Then someone gave a Mayday to get out of the building, as I understand. I know it was just evac, but I didn't know if it was a regular Mayday or just evacuation. Everybody out of the building.

At that point it was only firemen I thought

P. HYLAND

at that point and we're all starting to make our way down through the building not knowing that the whole south tower -- I thought it was just a partial collapse. No one gave any word that it was a total collapse or the south tower is gone or anything like that. I don't know. So we just start walking our way down, but there's a line of firemen all the way down in front of us. There's not a step that doesn't have a fireman on it and we're all walking down.

Q. Did you see civilians or was it all firemen?

A. I only recall firemen at this point.

Going down, going down, and at times you actually had to stop. There's just nowhere to go. I mean, they're not moving. We're like come on, guys, come on, let's go, let's go, and they can't. Probably because I don't realize that the lobby is probably as black as what I'm going to find out in about five minutes, knowing the way we're coming out and it's nighttime or it's debris. So we're waiting. We're like, come on, guys, let's go, let's go, and we're just waiting and it took a lot of time. We were up on the 21st floor. Those are double flights, I believe. One, two, scissor. That's one floor. So it's 42 flights of stairs.

P. HYLAND

So it took us quite a bit of time to hit the lobby and it was just destroyed. I mean, it looked like -- it wasn't the same lobby 15 minutes ago. It was just completely gone, every window was shattered, all the ceiling tile, the elevator banks had let go it seemed, the floor was all crushed down. I didn't see any -- I don't want to say I didn't see any bodies there right now.

At that point we were waiting and we're watching. It was all dust on the lower burn, and I did remember I went over because I knew where we came out right away -- where we went in. I went over there and I was just -- because we sort of got lost with some of the other guys and we didn't want to leave anybody behind. I saw Lieutenant Mera, I saw Dave Sandvik, I said, guys, over this way, this way. Everybody was coming out these doors because everybody was just going through glass. I saw shards of glass that guys were walking under. If they let go, they would have cut them in two. Then everybody got together, I know Mike Beehler, he was a proby, so I was watching him, and I said, all right, let's go. Then, I had to remember, I saw one of the dead jumpers that were right next to me.

P. HYLAND

But as we went out, now we're all overheated and stuff. We sat down right underneath the west bridge is it? The pedestrian bridge. We were sitting on top of a police car right underneath there. We sat there maybe like two minutes, three minutes. Wayne says, come on, let's get a little further away from the building, you know, if this building let's go, run along the sides of the building because that's the only thing that's going to protect you.

I think I saw -- I think it was two things. I think it was 6 Truck had put its aerial up on the hotel over there. I remember, going back, I don't want to backtrack, but I do remember when we were going in some radio transmissions that one fire truck pulled right up in front and one of the Chiefs was screaming at him get away from the front of the building. I can't remember the truck company that was there.

Then, going back to my story, we started walking north a little bit. We got maybe a half a block away and I was turning around watching. I think Wayne was saying don't stop, but I turned around and I'm watching this thing. I don't know. I just saw the top half of the north tower sink and sort of just sat down on itself, sat down, and then just started

P. HYLAND

shattering and just blowing out like a Christmas tree. That's when I screamed, here it comes, run for your lives, and they all ran.

We ran -- I don't think we ran too far. Everything was just coming at us. I just hid behind a car. Another fireman, Tom, from a Manhattan company, I just said, well, what's your name? He said Tom. I said I just want to know who I'm going to die with, and we just hid behind a car. Then we saw what happened, the whole thing came at us, and we just kept walking north after that. We just wanted to get away from it as fast as I could. That's it.

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Okay. The time is 1415 hours and the interview with Firefighter Paul Hyland is completed.

File No. 9110375

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DAVID SANDVIK

Interview Date: December 20, 2001

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

D. SANDVIK

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Today's date is December 20th, 2001. The time is 1440 hours and this is Battalion Chief Stephen King with the Safety Battalion, FDNY. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter 2nd Grade David Sandvik from Ladder Company 110, who HAD the roof on September 11th. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Dave, you can start whenever you're ready.

A. Okay. The day started out with I had the watch and I remember guys standing out on the apparatus apron and they could see the smoke coming from Manhattan, so we knew something was going on in Manhattan. I went back into the watch, I switched the radio onto the Manhattan frequency and found out it was the World Trade Center. Then right after that the news flashed and started showing the Trade Center where the first plane hit and I started getting dressed. I got my radio on, my bunker pants on, because we normally go to Manhattan pretty quick, just for a smoke condition at the Trade Center.

So I was standing right in front of the computer and the radio was already up to a third or fourth alarm and the computer came over and it was

D. SANDVIK

filling out the alarm with us, 205 and the battalion, respond to the north tower. So I got on the PA, told everybody we're going. It started out as like we're going to an unbelievable job at the Trade Center. That's all we thought.

Everybody gets on the rig, we start heading over the Brooklyn Bridge, and my position was the roof and I'm sitting in the middle seat, so facing backwards I couldn't see anything. I remember asking the OV what's going on, what's going on, and he said there are multiple floors on fire, and I'm just thinking, wow, we're in for a hell of a job. Halfway over the bridge, I guess midspan, all of a sudden I hear on -- we switch over to the Manhattan frequency now on the rig and I hear Manhattan calling Division 1, saying Division 1, almost like am I hearing you correctly? We got jumpers out of the Trade Center? Division 1 was like, yeah, we got jumpers, and right at that point I remember everybody went from being like, wow, we got a job, to like this is not a good thing we're going to, this is something like a worst nightmare. You never want to hear about jumpers but anyway...

So we get over there and we come over the Brooklyn Bridge heading down Broadway and we pulled

D. SANDVIK

down a street that leads to the back side of the Trade Center, it's off Church Street, and we get off the rig and at this point there's quite a few people, thousands of people coming up towards us, away from the Trade Center, but a lot of people, spectators too still kind of looking at what's going on. We start heading down the block and we get down to I guess about Church Street and the second plane hit, and I remember just being underneath. I never heard the motor of the plane, the sound of the engines. We just heard the explosion, you felt the explosion, and looking straight up and seeing that fireball that you see on the news, but we're underneath looking up now at it.

Lieutenant Mera, which was a great move, said to get back on the rig and we were going to try to make it around to the west side of the towers. So we ended up backing up to Broadway, then we head down Broadway, and at this point the streets were just thousands and thousands of people now. After the second plane hit, everybody was just fleeing Manhattan. We were able to manage to come down like a side street and we end up on Church Street now heading north and we end up, I guess, where like the farmers market is, somewhere in that vicinity, on Church Street.

D. SANDVIK

So we get off the rig and now we walk up to Vesey Street, west on Vesey to the west side and then south on the west side, and we're walking past the north tower and I remember we were looking for the command post. We figured it was set up outside and we didn't see it. We actually walked past the tower and the boss said he remembered that the ticket said we were going to the north tower and we already passed the north tower, so he guided us to make a U-turn. So we walked into the north tower and the command post happened to be in the lobby of the north tower.

So as we get into the lobby, he directs us to go off to the side and relieve ourselves, take the extra cylinders, put them on the floor, take all our extra equipment and just put them on the ground to reserve some energy. As we start putting stuff down, I take a roof rope, put it down, an extra cylinder, put it down, I see Engine 207 come walking in. So I call them over and they come over and they start putting down their roll-ups.

We're in there maybe about a minute, two minutes, just enough time to get in there, put our stuff down, and then he came back over to us and said, okay, we got our assignment. We're going up to the

D. SANDVIK

21st floor. We got a report of people trapped. So we pick up everything, put the roof rope back on, extra cylinders, and I happened to see a lobby guy, like a guy that works in the lobby, and I asked him which elevators does he have running, and he said all the elevators are out except for the low-rise, which will take us to 16.

So we get into the elevator and now it's us, I believe a Chief from Battalion 11, well, I'm sure of him, and I think there were some guys from an engine company, but I'm not sure about that. We take the elevator up to 16, get off, get into the stairwell, and we start heading up. The stairwell was pretty narrow and in the single file, us going up, civilians coming down. We get up to 21 and it happened to be a floor where the sign on the door says no re-entry on this floor. The nearest floor to re-enter was 23 or a floor below. The boss decided that we were blocking the traffic if we just stood there and forced the door, and so he said let's go up to 23, unload our stuff, almost make it like our own little command post, and then we'll come back down and then force the door. So we went up there. I got rid of the roof rope, extra cylinders. Whatever we didn't need we just left on

D. SANDVIK

23.

We came back down to 21, forced the door, went into the floor, searched the whole floor, forcing 40, 50 doors. There was a conference room. We forced that. We just finished searching the floor and I was with -- it was me, the boss and Artie, and the south tower came down and our building rocked. I remember windows blowing out and the air pressure in the hallway felt like we were almost in like a wind tunnel, and I remember the boss just saying get to the staircase.

So we ran to the staircase. It felt like an eternity, but we were standing there waiting and he's trying to call Battalion 11 on the radio and couldn't get them, couldn't get them. Finally, after about two calls, I said to the boss, I said, I'll run up to 23 and look for him.

So I go up to 23, look down a couple hallways. Complete darkness. There was nobody around. The floor was deserted. I come back down and I told him, I said, there's nobody up there. Nobody's on 23. So he says okay. He tries to call him again. Then at that point they gave the call for everybody to get out. Didn't say anything about the collapse of the south tower. We didn't know there was a collapse of

D. SANDVIK

the south tower. We thought -- well, I personally thought it was a collapse of the upper floors and that's what caused the building to rock and windows to blow out with the shift in the building.

Q. The upper floors of your tower?

A. Yes, the upper floors of --

Q. The north tower?

A. -- of our tower, yes. Not in my wildest dream did I think those towers were coming down.

So when they said to evacuate, get out, we got into the stairwell and headed on down, nice and calmly, nobody was running, nobody was pushing. It was just nice, calm, orderly fashion. We were checking floors as we were going down. I mean, checking a floor meant, if we got to a door, opened it and nobody was behind it, we continued, and if the guys in front of us opened a door, we passed that door. At one point, me and the OV, we came across a door that was locked and it couldn't have been checked because it wasn't forced. So we forced the door, opened it. I yelled down the hallway and no answer and I turned to my boss and said is that good enough? He said, yeah, that's good enough, and we just walked down, nice and calm.

As we got down to the lower floors, I guess,

D. SANDVIK

I'd say we were on the 6th floor, traffic in the stairwell came to two stops where I actually sat down in the stairs. I sat down for maybe a minute and then the traffic started moving and we got back up and started going again. It was I'd say 95 percent -- I mean, it was almost all firemen. We had a civilian here, a civilian there, but it was mostly firemen.

We got down to the lobby, and when we got out of the stairwell, the lobby was deserted. Nobody was down there except the people coming out of our stairwell. We were walking through and the elevator doors were blowing off. The lobby was just like a complete mess. I remember grabbing the proby that day and we were looking down the elevator bank and I said, man, this would make a hell of a picture. Then, you know, we just kind of walked out. When we got to the edge of the building, all the windows were gone. There were guys outside telling us hold up or come out, and the guy in front of me stopped, the guys outside told him to stop and then all of a sudden waved us on out.

We came out and we ended up on the west side. Right south of Vesey Street there's a pedestrian bridge and we went underneath that bridge and we actually stopped there a minute. We thought we were

D. SANDVIK

safe, we were under cover and anything falling from the building, you know, we were protected by this pedestrian crosswalk, and the boss said come on guys, we're still a little bit close. Let's move up a little bit. So we walked up about a half a block further and we saw Engine Co. 224's rig, and he said let's go over there because we were running with them and we figured we'd start unloading our masks and loosening up our jackets, put some of our tools down that we had left.

So we get over to the engine and we just started taking a couple things off. I got my mask off, I put my Halligan down, and that's when the south tower came down. It was just unbelievable. We started running.

Q. The north tower.

A. The north tower. Sorry. Yes, the north tower came down. We started running up the west side, maybe got to the end of 224's rig. I'm running, looking up, and I can see the top of the tower starting to come down and it was just an unbelievable sight. The OV yells holy shit, here it comes. I'm looking at the top of the building and when he yells that, I look down and I see the mushroom effect come rolling down the street, and we knew we weren't going to outrun

D. SANDVIK

this.

So along the west side there, it was just masks laid down. Thank God they were left there. I remember I just took like three steps over there and grabbed a mask. I couldn't even get it on my back. I just threw the face piece on, threw my helmet back on, and we were swallowed up in this debris of -- you name it, it was in there. Total darkness. Didn't know if we were buried or -- we had no idea what was going on.

About ten, 15 minutes, you know, who knows how long it really took, but it was taking so much time and I remember saying, boy, it's a beautiful, clear day and I'm outside and I can't see anything in front of me. I thought my mask was just covered because I remember just wiping the front piece thinking I was going to wipe away the dust, and I still couldn't see. So I start searching the ground and I came across another cylinder.

So I set up the mask on the ground, getting ready to, if I ran out of air, that I could change the bottles. I didn't have to change bottles, but the air started lifting, and then all of a sudden I could see a couple of faint flashlights, so I knew other guys were walking around. So I got up and it started lifting and

D. SANDVIK

I just started heading uptown and before I knew it, I was out in clear air, and I kept going uptown and then we just -- somehow the company got back together and we walked uptown, I guess, I don't know, five, six, seven blocks.

Then we took a break on the center medium of the west side, and our can man wasn't with us. So the officer kept on calling him, calling him, calling him. Finally, we got through to the radio and found out he was all right, and he got reunited with us, I guess, about a half hour after that, and that was about it.

We stayed on the west side by -- what is that, a college over there? I don't know. We stayed up there, about eight blocks away, and then the recall, guys started showing up on the recall. I mean, me personally, we were just spent. The guy next to me was throwing up. It felt like we went to ten jobs in a matter of two hours.

Then that was basically it. We didn't really do much. Well, later on that night we went in, we searched the subway, found our rig, and they said, if you find your own rig, you can drive it back to quarters, which we did, which was about 10:00 o'clock that night.

D. SANDVIK

BATTALION CHIEF KING: Okay. The time is
1457 hours and the interview with Firefighter Sandvik
is concluded.

File No. 9110376

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN WILSON

Interview Date: December 20, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is December 20th, 2001. The time is 7:07 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with John Wilson, firefighter first grade, from Engine 58, in the quarters of Engine 58.

Q. John, just tell me the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. We were dispatched as soon as the second plane hit. We were watching it in the house. They sent us down basically right away. So we got down there pretty quickly. I couldn't really say the time. I guess we parked on West Street and, I would say, probably maybe Barclay. I couldn't be sure. It was a block or two away from the Trade Center, north of the Trade Center. There were a lot of rigs there, so we didn't get that close.

We started walking down West, and the first thing we realized were the noises we were hearing were people hitting the ground. So we had to kind of detour across -- we went, I guess,

that median, over to the west side now of West Street, because we saw all these people coming down and we didn't want to get hit by them.

So we kind of detoured around West Street like to the west side of West Street, kept walking, took a lot of extra bottles with us, whatever we could take. I think we took a rope.

We were under the impression that the command post was at Liberty and West, so that's where we were headed. When we got there, there wasn't anybody there, no inclination, no -- it didn't seem like there was ever a command post there. But there was nobody around.

We didn't go down Liberty for the same reason as West Street, because people were jumping and there was crap coming off the building. So we kind of went right by this south pedestrian walkway on West Street, you know, that goes over, and I guess there was kind of like a parking lot or something on that corner between Liberty and Cedar on West Street here. We kind of were going through that, walking wide of the street so we didn't get hit by anything.

First thing I remember was we kind of

got split up. There was eight of us. The lieutenant was worried that three of the guys had gone ahead. They walked I guess a little faster than us. So they were ahead. Now he was like where are they? We could see them up the block. They were further up Liberty when I first saw them.

Then we came over to realize that one of the brothers was down on the ground, and I went over there. I believe it was Danny Suhr from 216 Engine. He was on the ground, and his guys were with him. He was a mess. The other bunch of guys really didn't stand there that long, because they were taking care of their own guy.

Q. What happened? Did he get hit with debris?

A. He got hit with a body. I didn't see it, but that's what they told me when I went over there. I said, "What happened? Is he all right?" They said, "He got hit by" -- I don't know who told me, but that's what I was told. I didn't see that. He was crumpled on the ground, and he didn't look too good.

Then someone -- I don't know if it was a Port Authority guy, because there were a few people out on the street with white shirts and radios, like maybe from the buildings. One of those guys or a civilian gave me a radio. They said, "Here." It was a Fire Department radio. It said 216 on it. It was all full of blood. So I guess it might have been Danny Suhr's. So I threw it in my pocket.

Now we noticed Chief Scheffold walking up Liberty Street. We're yelling at him to get out of the street because we didn't want him to get hit, but he just kept walking. Now we were deciding where we were going to go. The command post we were assuming was probably in the Trade Center lobby by this time.

We ran into the same Port Authority security guys, whoever they were, because they had their own radios. They were telling us that they think it was in Two World Trade they said there were firemen in the lobby there. He said we could access that by going through the Marriott Hotel. There was a bar I believe on Liberty called Tall Ships. He said if we went

through there we could go through the lobby, and then we could get to the Trade Center. So that's what we did.

We quickly ran across the street, and we got into the Vista Hotel through the Tall Ships bar. We walked through the lobby I guess of -- we walked through the bar. I guess we came to the lobby. From my recollection I thought we kind of turned to the right. It wasn't like a hard turn, but we went to the right, going east now. That's where we hooked up with the other three. We saw the other three guys that we got separated from. So we got together with them. So now the eight of us were in the lobby.

I don't know where they came from or if they were there when I got there, but Chief Scheffold, Chief Marchbanks, Chief Galvin and my lieutenant were having a little powwow. They were talking. The lieutenant said relax. We took our masks off. We were standing in the lobby.

At this time we were in the lobby of the Marriott. Me, I personally don't remember seeing other companies at this time. It was

basically us and a few civilians, mostly people that worked there. It's totally hearsay, but I know a couple of the other guys, they'll tell you in their interviews they had seen 288, 23 Engine. So they'll be able to tell you better where they went. But I know of other guys from 58 did see other companies, but I personally don't remember seeing them.

I would say we were in the lobby I don't think it was more than five or ten minutes, and they were talking, I guess discussing where should we go, what should we do. I think the lieutenant was on his way back to us to talk to us, and we heard the loudest roar that I ever heard in my life.

Everybody just ran. We ran away from the noise. So the noise was to my east as I was standing the there. We ran back basically the way we came in, I don't know how far. All of a sudden I was just picked up. I felt the wind from behind me just pick me up and throw me. So now I'm on the ground.

Now I started crawling. Hopefully I think I'm crawling the way I came in. However

long that lasted, ten seconds -- I don't know. It seemed like a long time. It just subsided, the noise. It was just like a crescendo sound like boom, boom, boom, and it just got louder and faster for like -- what did it last, ten seconds or something like that?

After it was over I'm amazed, because I thought that was the end of it right there. I was getting pelted. I was just trying to crawl. When I got up, I grabbed the flashlight. There was a flashlight on the floor. It wasn't even mine. I just grabbed it. The first person I saw was one of these hotel guys crawling around. I grabbed him and said, "Come on. We'll go this way."

Now I'm trying to call my guys. Now I started using the radio that they gave me outside, because I had, I would say -- four of the guys with us were probably basically probies. I tried to call them at the same time as I'm calling guys in the lobby. I'm trying to see what the hell is going on. Now it's pitch-black.

I hear my lieutenant on the radio. I don't know where he is, but he's calling me.

He's calling whoever he can call too. By this time I ran into two of the other guys, Mike and Scott, from 58.

Now it seemed like there were people all over the place. I don't know where they came from. We tried to sort of go out towards -- we saw light. I think it was towards Liberty Street. It was just like a light. There were no doors or anything like that.

A bunch of guys lifted up a rolldown gate that must have just fell down, because it wasn't there, I don't think, when we came in. So they lifted that up.

Now the lieutenant, he was calling us and I'm trying to find out where he is. I'm calling all the guys outside. Actually I think John Weber had the radio. I got him on the radio. He said he was outside already. He got out with three of the other guys, I believe. So I said, "All right. Stay outside."

We didn't know where the lieutenant was yet. I still to this day the three of us aren't sure, the three of us that were in there now still with the collapse, the first one, that we

somehow located the lieutenant. I don't know if I found him or who found him. We don't even know. We just heard him now, without his radio. I think we just heard his voice. We went back towards the building in the lobby area. I believe he was behind the elevators that were facing south. I think there was a bank facing south and north.

So we found him. Now he's buried. He's behind this elevator. He's trapped. We told him that everybody was accounted for. That was a load off his mind. He was worried about where everybody was. I said, "We've got everybody." He was like, "All right. Then get me out of here." We're like, "All right. We're going to get you out of there."

At this point I personally didn't know that that whole building collapsed. I knew something collapsed on us. That was some scene there for a minute.

At this point -- I don't know if you want me to tell you this, because I didn't actually see that. But Chief Galvin had a rope, and he wrapped it around a pillar, and he went

one way and he gave the bag to Scott from 58. He went towards where Lieutenant Nagel was with the bag.

So I remember him dropping the bag at our feet. We were standing there talking to Bob. He said he was fine. He said, "I'm all right. I'm not hurt." I gave him a flashlight to see if he could look around, see what was going on in there.

Then the weirdest thing was -- you mentioned before -- I never really heard any maydays. I didn't hear any of that. I didn't have the radio out of my pocket until the collapse happened. Now when I brushed myself off, it was in my pocket. So I didn't have the mic out or anything like that. So that's why I wasn't hearing anything.

113 Truck appeared out of somewhere. They weren't with us -- they said they heard on the radio -- I guess they heard that we were in there because my lieutenant was trapped. So they came in. Ray Brown was the lieutenant. I know him a little bit. His brother was a fireman here. So he came in. I guess there was four of

them.

So Scott Paskewitz went out. We asked him, "Scott, why don't you go out and see if you can get some tools," because we had nothing. So he went out, and he came in -- I don't know if he came in, but 113 and him wound up coming in together. They had a partner saw, a saws-all. 113 brought in air bags.

We proceeded to try to do something with Bob. I don't know how to describe it. It was just a maze of junk. There were little studs, there was sheetrock, there were pipes, wires, everything.

He was just in this little corner behind the elevator. He said he was fine but it wasn't like he could walk out. I could see him. I could talk to him. The ceiling above him looked very shaky. Something had knocked out. It was like a pillar. It was a wooden-faced pillar.

A lot of those pillars I think had wood facing on them. The one I saw later when the building was coming down, it was just an I beam probably. I don't know if it was. That was

leaning against the wall. It looked like it was holding a lot up. So we couldn't touch that.

Ray Brown, he was like -- I was kind of trying to watch the ceiling, and Mike got the saws-all. He cut, I would say -- at the same time, I forgot to say, it was Lieutenant Nagel, I'm talking to him. He told me that he could hear Chief Marchbanks and Chief Scheffold.

I was like, "You all right?" He said, "Yeah, yeah. Marchbanks and Scheffold are right back here." He could hear them, I guess; I couldn't. He told me that they were right near him somewhere; how far, I don't know.

So Mike had cut, I would say, maybe two pieces of pipe or the sheet metal or whatever he was cutting. He was cutting another piece. Now we heard this noise again, like this rumbling noise. I assumed the same thing is happening that just happened however long ago it was. It didn't seem like it was a half hour. It seemed to happen pretty fast.

So I just was standing right there. It was Ray, me, Mike and Scott. The other two guys from 113 actually left. Ray asked them -- he

goes, "I'm going to go outside and see if I can go around." He was looking for another way to access Bob Nagel.

So it was just Ray, me, Mike, Scott and one guy from 113 that I remember being there now. So it was five of us. Now we hear this rumbling again. We're like, "Oh, Jesus. Now what?" We tried to run again. We were running the way I think we came in. We were running back, I would say, towards Liberty Street, in whatever's left of the hotel now. Maybe half of it is left now. I don't know.

So the same scenario. We get knocked down and pounded around and knocked around. However long, 10 seconds, whatever, 20 seconds, from what they say, whatever I read. It just seemed longer when it happened.

So now I'm still around after the second one. I'm like, "Oh, man, this is amazing." Now I'm screaming to Scott. I scream, "Scott." He said, "What?" I would say he was a foot away from me. We were laying on the floor, because I hit the floor and I rolled and I hit the wall. So I just stayed by the wall.

When everything stopped, the noise stopped and everything, I was screaming Scott's name. He was at arm's length away from me. I could touch him. I didn't see him. I'm calling him. It got black again, and it cleared up pretty good after the first collapse. I guess because it wasn't that big an area. It cleared up pretty good. We could see fine. When I got outside later, it was a mess out there like with the dust.

So now we heard the second rumbling. Now we ran again. I'm calling for Scott. He's right next to me. Now I'm calling Mike. He's not answering me. Ray Brown is not answering me. The other guy, I didn't even get his name. At this point I'm calling him. Nobody is answering. I'm like, oh, man. Bob is not answering.

So finally now I see a light. I'm screaming. The guy's saying, "Keep talking." It turned out to be a guy, Richie, from 113. He came to my voice with his light. Mike said something. Now he's coming. So now they're coming out. But I still haven't heard from Ray Brown.

I'm like, oh, man, Bob's not calling. I'm thinking they must be buried now, both of them. I didn't see Ray. So we're like let's try to make our way out of here and see what the hell happened, because I still hadn't in my wildest dreams thought that two buildings, both of them, came down.

So we started to work towards the way we saw the light. It turned out I guess it was around Liberty Street. It was right near that south walkway we wound up coming out.

Just as we're getting ready -- because we had to climb up -- I would say the rubble probably was like two stories high just to get up to go out, out of the lobby area.

I turned around and I see a figure coming at me. I come back down. It's Ray Brown. He's like staggering out. I grabbed him. He was a bloody mess. I said, "Are you all right, Ray?" He's said, "No, I'm not." So we grabbed him. We helped him.

Now we start climbing up out of the place. Nobody around when we came up and looked out. It was just like a ghost town. It was just

like burning vehicles, the snow scene type of thing, cars buried, fires, cars on fire, puddles everywhere. I don't know what that was from. A lot of puddles, which I was afraid to step in, not thinking I'm going down a level. Trying to avoid that and trying to carry him.

The first person I remember seeing was a photographer, a guy with a big camera around his neck. I didn't pay him any mind. I saw a fireman too. I saw Jimmy Marketti, who is a chief now. He's coming towards the building with a pair of shorts and a T-shirt. He just came in on his motorcycle, he said.

So he starts helping us carry Ray. I'm tell him that Bobby Nagel, we lost him in the building. I'm having a very hard time carrying this guy too, because I'm a little tired, a little beat up.

So a couple other fire trucks, Scott got an EMS chair out of a broken down van. We put Ray Brown in the chair, tried to carry him in that. That was pretty difficult too, just up and down whatever, I beams, trying to avoid this water. For whatever reason, I'm thinking I'm

going to sink.

Gathered up another fireman, start seeing people. He had oxygen. He threw oxygen on Ray. So I kind of pass him off to some other guys. I can't even carry this guy anymore. At that point Jimmy Marketti, myself and Scott went back and tried to get back into the building, basically to look for Bob.

So we went back in and were looking around for Bob. Actually when we first tried to go back in, I don't think we made it back in, because now a fire had started right by the area we came out of. There was a fire there. So we had to go around another way to get back in.

The area we got back into in the lobby area, believe it or not there was a pretty good size area that was unbelievable. There was still bottled water there that didn't break, the very southwest, I guess, of the hotel that we had wound up amazingly getting to.

So we climbed back in. Now we're going back over this pile of just rubble. That's exactly what it was, just piles of like ceilings that came down. It was a mess, trying to go up

and down and around, calling him, no answer.

Now other people show up. I remember there was a guy from Rescue 1, I think I saw. I saw 252 Engine. It might have been an officer from 252 and a fireman. Now other guys just start showing up. Now there's a good ten people. I don't know where they're coming from, but maybe they heard us originally. I don't know.

They're in there. They're trying to go through holes. Everybody is just trying to get in. We're not getting anything done there. It was bad news. Bob is not answering the radio. His radio was kind of shitty to begin with, I think, because he was having a hard time -- even before the second collapse his radio was I think dying or maybe it was just all the crap in the air.

So we went back in. I would say basically futile attempts it turned out to be, unfortunately, to get back towards the area where we knew Bob was. The building actually collapsed right up to the pillar that had the rope on it. You could still see the rope. We knew we were just north of that.

How far could we have run after the second building came down? We were talking amongst ourselves, it couldn't have been more than 10 or 20 feet that we got before the building knocked us down again.

Then a chief showed up out of -- like I said, I don't know where these people came from. I'm not paying attention. Now there's a chief there, and he's asking us what's going on. I told him my lieutenant's in there, he's still buried, we have to try to find him.

He said, "Have you talked to him?" I said, "Not since the second collapse. I've had no communication." I said no communication with him. We have no -- in other words, no communication -- we don't know where he is, blah, blah, blah. He's telling everyone we've got to get out now, get out of the building. So he starts herding everybody out of there.

So we got out. He chased everybody out. We got out. I went back again. Numerous times that day we went back, kept going back in. I don't know why, piece of mind, I don't know, which you're not going to get by doing that.

Just to try to think I'm going to be able to find my lieutenant and the chiefs, which we never did. We still haven't to this day.

Basically after we got out of there that time, finally we got out of there. One guy, Mike, with me was limping badly. He said, "Oh, I'm all right." It turned out his leg was pretty messed up. He was limping badly.

We walked towards the river, looking for an ambulance, an EMS or anything, trying to drink water, walked around, found him an ambulance. Actually we didn't find him an ambulance. We walked around in almost like a circle. We went to the river, headed back around, got our eyes washed out along the way somewhere, got a drink along the way, and came right back to where we started.

I think I went back in again. Mike at this point was hurting pretty bad, and I was starting to go find an ambulance to get him of there, which he didn't want to leave.

Basically that's what we did for the rest of the day. We just kind of walked around. After we got out of there, we took care of Mike.

He got in an ambulance. Actually he went with someone else. He wound up getting on a boat.

Everybody from here started showing up. I ran into the guys from my company; I don't know what time it was. They were under the impression the whole company was missing. I said, "No, Bob's missing."

Then we tried to get back in again. Basically all day I must have spent basically going in and out of there, to where Bob was. I really had no contact with other firemen that I remember in the lobby of the Marriott. Like I said, once you talk to all the guys from here, a few of them did, at least two or three of them I know.

Like I said, we got split up. So they saw the other companies and they got sent to wherever, and they were waiting for us. Otherwise we would have been in probably the same place they went. I don't know if they went up in the hotel or to the south tower. Like I said, you might hear that from some of the other guys.

Q. Is that it, John?

A. That's about it.

Q. Thank you, John, for all your help.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 7:30
p.m., and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110377

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN WEBER

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is December 20th, 2001. The time is 7:50 p.m. I am Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the New York City Fire Department, Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with John Weber, firefighter first from Engine 58, in the quarters of Engine 58.

Q. John, tell us the events of September 11th as you recall them.

A. We got the call on the second fifth to go down after the second tower was struck. We took some extra masks and any extra cylinders we had. We tied up some rope rigs to hold double bottles on, put them over your shoulder to carry. We figured we're going to need the bottles on the upper floors of this thing.

After we thought we were equipped well enough, we took off for the box. We went up, all the way downtown to West Street, where we parked the rig, and started getting ready. We took our bottles off. I had control that day, so I had the radio, I had two bottles, I had the roof rope. I had something else; I don't remember what. We were taking Halligans, axes.

We were taking every single thing out of the rig, basically, just to be well-prepared when we're up there. We didn't know exactly what we were going to do.

We started heading down towards the second tower. Somehow our boss was told that we had to report to the second tower. As we were following along, we wanted to make sure that we all stayed together.

Q. When you say the second tower, you mean the south tower?

A. The south tower, I'm sorry. Yeah, the second tower got hit, the south tower. We were supposed to head in that vicinity. Where exactly, I wasn't sure exactly where at the time we were supposed to go.

We started heading there. As we got closer to the buildings, he just kept on saying, "Stay close together. I want everybody together. I don't want to have to be looking for people." Everybody understood.

As we were going, the jumpers were coming down, as we got real close to both buildings. Jumpers were just coming down right

near us, so we kept veering out further away from the building, kind of like around about, going around the back way until we can get a clearing.

As we were going around towards Liberty, the south tower around Liberty, that's when we saw I believe it was 216, the guy that got hit from the jumper. We saw his men with him or a group of men with him, firefighters, pulling him to the side.

They put over an urgent, I believe it was. He was badly hurt. We waited there with the company there with him until EMS arrived. That was the boss, Lieutenant Nagel, myself, John Wilson, Scott Paskewitz.

We kind of did split apart when all the jumpers started going. Some guys went to where they thought they could get shelter, and we of went around the other way. We stayed with him until EMS came. Then we made our way back in towards the south tower. That's when we saw Chief Sheffield and I guess the other battalion chiefs that were working that day from the 12th Battalion. We saw them walking.

We were yelling for them to come on the

other side of the parking lot, because that's where the firefighter got struck by the jumper, that they were too close to the building, that something could happen to them.

We got their attention. They moved away. Somehow we all ended up going into the south tower. We looked up, we found a clearing. We literally ran across Liberty Street, across the parking lot, into the hotel there, the --

Q. Marriott?

A. The Vista, I think it's called, technically the Vista Hotel, the Marriott Hotel. We ran into that, because we were told there was a way to get through from the Vista into the south tower, which is where we had to go meet the chiefs and find out where we're going to operate.

We met in the lobby. We met the other two members that we split off from in the lobby. We were there maybe a minute or so. The boss said wait here. Lieutenant Nagel said to wait where we were in the center and relax, because we walked all the way from West Street. By the time we all the way around, it was a nice walk with all the stuff on, the extra gear. He said to

take a blow, relax until we found out where we're operating, and I'll get back to you. Just stay here.

He went around to find the chiefs around the elevator shaft. By the elevator shafts is the last known place I know he was. We weren't in the building more than a minute when he told us to cool down, take our coats off, we took our coats off. We were hanging out, waiting.

I was just getting my bearings to see exactly where I was, and you just heard a banging, "bang, bang, bang." People yelled that it was coming through the window. The way the noise was going to me or to a lot of us, we thought it was another plane coming. It was two; why not three or four. It sounded to us like it was a plane coming through the windows.

Most of us that were in that little group there ran towards the entrance where we came in. As I'm facing out towards West Street, it was kind of like left. We ran left.

As we go, the ceiling started hitting us, falling down. We all just dove into a

corner. There must have been 20 or 30 guys there. We just huddled, a big huddle, literally on top of each other, just like covering each other, right near it seemed like a desk or a bar, like the check-in desk or a bar top, something like that. We waited there until everything kind of calmed down for a while. It was all blacked out.

We got up and I remember the hotel workers, I guess, the maintenance man or security guy or whatever, or the manager of the hotel, asking one of the other members there of his crew, "What's the best way out?," because the front door that we were at that we came in was blocked. The rolldown gates came and all the debris were in front of the door. So he looked for another stairwell out. That was covered too. We tried to gather together as many people as we can. Everybody started working on that one gate again that we came in. We were able to lift it up enough and started shoveling guys out the door to get out of there.

I got out on the first -- right after the first collapse myself. I was with Peter

Giammarino. Shortly after that we found Andy Ansbrosio, like right afterwards, sitting in basically the street, looking up at what was going on. We walked away from it a bit to see what was going on. Other guys were coming out the door, the hole that we had made.

A little while after that I heard my lieutenant doing a roll call, finding out where everybody is, calling, "58 control." I responded. "Who do you have with you?" I told him I had two other members with me. I told him their names. He said, "All right." That was about it. We all thought that they were out the other way; it was just a regular roll call.

We waited a little while. Other guys were coming out. Everybody was kind of heading in the same direction. We were right next to the south bridge, that pedestrian foot bridge. So we were right near there.

Some of the guys had concerns over whether we should be there. It was mostly up. It was 99 percent up still. People had concerns that maybe it's not the best place to be since everything was falling down still. They wanted

to move out a little bit more.

We followed the crowd basically out towards -- there's another foot bridge -- I don't know what the name of it is -- that runs north and south. The north bridge and south bridge both run east to west, but there was another foot bridge that runs north and south between two buildings on the way to the marina. I don't know what street that is. I guess it's a little part of Liberty Street, maybe.

We were there. We started heading there. We started helping people onto boats. Giammarino, myself and Ansbrosio started helping people onto boats. Everybody there. Police was there, EMS was there, all different -- some people that were in the buildings, some people that were out in the street. We were just pulling them out of the way, out of what we called the fall zone, I guess.

We were working on that, and a little while later, 15 minutes, 20 minutes later, is when the second tower started going.

Q. You were still by the marina?

A. About near the marina. Between that

foot bridge that ran north and south, as people were coming up, we were bringing them back.

Then 15, 20 minutes, a half hour -- I don't even know how long it was -- the north tower started coming down. We were actually able to see that starting to come down. Then it was just a plume of dust. You couldn't see anything then. You couldn't see anything two feet in front of you.

It was really dusty after the first one, but it started to clear out. By the marina you were all right. But after the second one came, everything was another dust ball for a while. It might have taken me five or ten minutes to get to the marina and five or ten minutes later is when the second one came down.

Then after that one we heard -- between the first one and second one coming down, I heard numerous maydays. Besides communicating with our boss, because everything sounded fine with them, trying not to clutter up the air because there were so many other maydays going on, we just monitored for a while.

There was one individual from a truck

company -- I don't even remember what truck it was anymore. He was saying several times that he was just trapped, he was all right, he didn't know where he was, he was knocked out. Somebody kept on asking, "What building were you in? Where are you now?"

He wasn't sure at all. He said he got knocked out, he just regained consciousness, and he didn't remember where he was at all. He was okay, for the most part, just trapped. He couldn't get out. I heard that all the way up until the second collapsed. Then after that, I didn't hear his mayday anymore.

After that, after the second collapse, we saw Mike Fitzpatrick, another one of our members, and John Wilson coming towards us up towards the marina wall. Basically we went in with eight guys. I knew we didn't have a lieutenant anymore, and we were missing one other guy, Dave McGovern. We weren't quite sure where he was.

We regrouped and we had to start running lines from the marine unit. They pulled up. They wanted guys to start stretching lines

up. It wasn't Liberty Street but one of the other side streets from where they were berthed. We started running three inch up or whatever. We started hauling that up. That's when we saw Dave McGovern come in from around the other way.

We stood there for a while and helped stretch the line a little bit. Then we heard the story from Mike Fitzpatrick and John Wilson and Scott Paskewitz that Lieutenant Nagel was trapped after the first collapse, that they were speaking to him, that they had tied a search rope and gave it to him.

I think they said they held his hand at the time, that they were at least somehow able to physically touch him. I think they held his hand or just let him know where he was, gave him whatever he might have needed at that time and were working on getting him out when they started hearing the second collapse occur, or what ended up to be the second collapse. They didn't know what it was.

After we all regrouped and they told us the story and we were loading hose off the marine unit, we decided that we were going to try to get

back in that area and see if there's any way of helping him, if he's still there. We weren't getting a response off the radio anymore. But maybe there was a shot that they could get back in the same area.

That's what we did. We went right back to the Vista Hotel, all of us together, going up the heap, down into it. There were other guys there. I think one of the rescue companies were there. They were looking all through every nook and cranny. They found the search rope. They followed it into the debris. They said that they couldn't see him -- they couldn't find anything more. They were calling, but there was no response.

As we were in there looking, trying to find ways of getting into the holes from outside, they called us out. They told anybody inside -- they saw us going in. Somebody started calling us out, that there was another collapse potential for that half of the building. The Vista collapsed on the left side, but the right side was still pretty much -- two- or three-quarters of it was still together.

They called us out. We went out. We stayed for a little while, right on the heap, clearing stuff, looking for people. We went back in a second time after they had other guys in there. We went in a second time, looked around a little bit more. They called us out a little while after that. We came out. That was the last time I was in the building.

Then we started working our way around to where all the crushed rigs were, closer to the north tower, I guess where all the chiefs were, basically.

Q. The command post?

A. Where the command post was, right. The command post was I think closer to the north tower, in between but closer to the north tower where the parking garage was or something, right behind it, I remember, in one of the buildings, closer to the north bridge.

So we started heading over towards that heap, looking under -- every single man that was there had saws going, Halligans going, axes going, trying to pry the metal back. Once we found a rig, knocking on it to see if there was

any response.

Then there was a large building, brick building, that was on fire, potential for collapse, that we started stretching lines for that, then using a hand line, alternating on and off. We were putting water on that. As you alternated off, you started searching and digging again.

That's basically what we did the whole day. I think we were there up until near 12:00 that night. We were there until at least around 12, maybe a little earlier but around 12.

Q. That's it, John?

A. Yeah, that's it.

Q. Thanks a lot, John, for your help.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 8:05,
and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110385

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PAUL DIPAOLO

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today is December 26, 2001. The time is approximately 1400 hours. I am Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes, Safety Command, conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER DiPAOLO: Paul DiPaolo, Engine 205.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: -- regarding the events of except 11th, 2001.

Q. Paul, if you would, just tell me how your day unfolded, how the events unfolded.

A. I was home originally, saw it on the news. After the second plane hit, they gave the recall. I called Eddie Green. I told him I would meet him at his house. He said Richie Murray had already called him. I went to Eddie's. Richie picked the both of us up. We came to the firehouse. We got to the firehouse, got our gear. We picked up Rick Fowler, Paul Beck and John Urso, who were here already.

The six of us went across. The first building had already collapsed. We went across the bridge. We parked on I think it was Broadway and probably Liberty off Cortlandt, in that area.

As we're walking down Liberty Street,

what we had heard was there were people trapped -- they thought people were trapped in the Burger King, which was on the corner of Church and Liberty, around the corner of 10 and 10's quarters.

As soon as we got to the corner, we saw Tom Boccarossa, who was the chauffeur of Engine 205 that day, standing on the corner by himself. We got to him. We said, "Tom, what's going on?" He said, "Everybody's gone." We asked him to explain, because we didn't know exactly what he meant. He said the last thing he heard, he couldn't get in touch with the engine or the truck.

About maybe three, four minutes after we originally spoke to him, we felt a rumble. Me and Paul Beck grabbed Tom, and we ran down Trinity, and I believe we made it probably right around the corner. I don't know what street that is. What street would that be right there?

Q. Thames Street.

A. Thames that goes all the way through. We made it around the bend, and the three of us made it right around the corner as everything

came down. We got hit with all the debris. It knocked us down. We crawled into a little service elevator area in the building. There were I think one or two other firemen in there already.

We waited about it had to be ten minutes or so, and then we heard a voice on the loudspeaker saying if anybody can hear this follow -- because Tom we thought was hurt. He wasn't feeling good. He had been standing out there for the first collapse. He went onto the rig.

Me and Paul brought him -- let me see where it would be. We walked along Broadway probably to Pine Street, and that's where a security guard was with a bullhorn and a flashlight. But at that point it was all black.

We brought Tom into the building. I think it could have been the Equitable building. I'm not sure. We left Tom Boccarossa there, because they had set up a first aid station. Me and Paul Beck went back to find everybody else.

We met up with Richie and John Urso. They couldn't find Eddie Green; and Rick Fowler,

they knew where he was, but he wasn't with us anymore.

After that we went looking for Eddie. In turn we found the engine. We met up with all the engine guys. We asked them if they had heard from the truck. They didn't hear anything.

Eventually we found Eddie. He had been buried under a lot of stuff, because he obviously ran a different way. Three of us ran one way. The other ones, I'm not sure which way they ran.

Then we finally got all together, and we went right to the area to start looking for people. After we met up with the engine and Lieutenant Hayes, we went back to the rig. We got the rig and we drove it down onto the west side, and we drove it right in front of 90 West.

Actually we supplied -- it turned out we supplied water to a standpipe in the building, because they had a couple of stangs going out of the window into the other building. That's where the engine stayed most of the day.

I was in the rig for a while. Richie was in the rig for a while. Then we basically just went around searching and stuff like that

the rest of the day.

Q. You didn't see anyone -- you got there after -- okay.

A. We got there after the first building was already down.

Q. That's basically it; right? You found the engine, because I know they were --

A. Right. We found the engine after a while. We were just looking around and happened to see them. Richie Murray kept asking people on the radio, "Anybody seen" -- first Eddie. Then "Has anybody seen the engine? Has anybody seen Ladder 118?" We finally got in touch with the engine, but nobody ever heard from the truck.

So we have really no idea except Lieutenant Hayes had said the 15th floor. He thought it was the north tower going up. That was the last thing he had heard from them. Nobody actually heard from them. We have no idea.

We found the truck on the west side, right in front of West and Vesey. That's where the truck was. We have a picture of it there. So we know that's where it was parked. Then they

moved it up Vesey to North End. That's actually where we found it parked after we were walking around all day, because then we started looking for it to see where it was. But somebody had moved it. We don't know who moved it.

Q. Yeah, out of the way.

A. They moved it up that way out of the way.

Q. Paul, thank you.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: That concludes the interview. It's approximately 1405

File No. 9110386

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TIMOTHY JULIAN

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

T. JULIAN

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 26, 2001. The time is approximately 12:45 hours. My name is Chief Art Lakiotes, Safety Battalion, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

THE WITNESS: Firefighter JULIAN, Timothy Julian.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: What company?

THE WITNESS: Ladder 118.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: 118, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Tim, if you would just tell me in your own words -- start with the response and then take me through.

A. All right. I'm assigned to Ladder 118. I was working in Engine 205 on a mutual exchange for the day tour. The box came in. I believe the plane crashed at a quarter to nine. We responded to a plane hitting the first, you know, north tower, just the engine, not the truck.

I had the backup position. I didn't have a radio. I also was riding backwards, and I remember going over the Brooklyn Bridge, and we still at that point probably thought it was an accident. I remember

T. JULIAN

saying to the guys, "Guys, we're going to make history today." I meant that in a good way.

It was just a lot of hysteria, people exiting Manhattan over the Brooklyn Bridge. When we got to the Manhattan side, it was chaos, and I do believe that's one of the reasons why I'm still here is because at that point, I think we were responding to the north tower, and there was no access at all, so I think we made a left on Broadway at that point and started heading south.

Because I was riding backwards, I was a little disoriented. Finally, we made it to Broadway and Liberty, and the second plane hit, so that was probably about nine o'clock, and it was the loudest explosion I ever heard. It was mass hysteria, and screaming, and people running, and that's when we realized -- at least I realized it was more than just an accident. It was an attack.

There were some injured civilians at that point that came up to us asking us to help them, and we offered them some EMS bandages and what not and told them to keep moving.

We got back on our rig, and we proceeded south. I'm not sure which street we went west on, but

T. JULIAN

we came back up Trinity Place, the corner of Trinity and Liberty, and we parked our rig, and I remember getting off our rig, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A. He saw what was going on, believe me.

Anyhow, we walked down Liberty Street west past 10 and 10's quarters. They already had a triage going on already, wounded civilians. In the street that day there was like a market probably going to take place, a farmer's market or shopping bazaar, whatever you want to call it. It was vendors wagons.

Now, at this point, Liberty Street was pretty much desolate, except us. It was Lieutenant Hayes, Chris Murray, fireman at 205, myself at backup, and then George Clancy from 205 in control.

As we were walking down Liberty Street, we started realizing that, not only was there bodies and debris in the street, some burning, paper and debris, metal, but we started seeing -- it wasn't even bodies. It was parts of bodies, and it was pretty disgusting

T. JULIAN

and shocking, and I think we realized we were obviously in a bad zone, perhaps things falling from the building, and Lieutenant Hayes made a smart decision.

We saw a command post going on under the foot bridge at West Street and Liberty, but we walked to, I guess, Washington Street or even Greenwich. I'm not sure. Yeah, I think Greenwich. We cut over to Albany and down to West Street and back to that foot bridge, and I believe that's another reason the clock's ticking in our favor, not knowing at the time Lieutenant Hayes made that decision, figuring we were in a -- I don't want to say a collapse zone. We didn't think it would collapse but --

Q. Falling debris zone at least.

A. Falling debris zone. It was dangerous. Saw body parts everywhere. So we did that, and we made it to the foot bridge. At West Street, I remember seeing Chief Barbara. I saw you chief, but unfortunately -- I knew he was talking to another chief. I didn't know it was you.

At that point, I remember they were getting a report that a second -- another plane -- the Pentagon got hit, and we got a report another plane was coming in, and I believe it was a FBI agent, or whoever, or

T. JULIAN

police, and he was saying it's not another plane yet. It is a plane, but it's a fighter jet, and in hindsight it turns out probably that was the fighter jet that was going to maybe shoot down that plane, but we thought another plane was coming in, and we were in a bad spot.

Q. Paranoia was bound to set in.

A. But upon his -- we heard it fly over, and then we felt safe. It wasn't a kamikaze plane, you know.

Q. Yes.

A. I remember being at that command post, and it was pretty much a lot of radio traffic and a lot going on, and we were kind of nagging Chief Barbara to put us to work. We saw several jumpers from Building 1, the north tower, on the West Street side, and every time we saw a jumper, every time we were anxious to go to work. Put out the fire, they stop jumping. And I remember Lieutenant Hayes saying 205, you know, he wants to go chief, and the chief barked at us, "Guys, open your coats, loosen up your masks and sit tight for a minute, stand by till we figure out where we are going to put you."

Because I guess on the original plan we were going to the first tower, but due to traffic and

T. JULIAN

hysteria, we didn't make it there. Again, the clock is ticking in our favor, not knowing this, though, of course.

At that point, I think I remember getting an assignment to 216, 205, I think 217, and I think ladder 122, to go into 2 World Trade, report to another command post, and take it from there.

At that point, we got our gear together. We headed up Cedar Street to our left. Between us and the building was a small church, and there was a parking lot at the foot of that foot bridge, and there were several car fires going on. So we kind of went up Cedar Street for that very reason to avoid that to get to Washington Street, and then we were going to cut across to go into an entranceway at 2 -- the Liberty Street entrance at 2 World Trade, and that's when I saw 216 when they rounded the corner, and they were about 20 feet in front of me.

I saw them acting -- I don't know what's the word. Just excitedly, and there was a problem. I really thought that first they found a civilian injured, and I ran up as did other companies that were with us, and that's when I saw it was a fireman that was injured and down, and they began dragging him.

T. JULIAN

We figured let's get him out of the area. In front of 90 West on Cedar there was a scaffold. Let's bring him up to there. We figured that's more safe, and I heard them saying "Danny, Danny" and I realized. I looked down. It was Danny Suhr, from 216. I knew him from the football team. I still didn't realize that was him, you know. I just -- [REDACTED], I guess, but I remember help dragging him over there. I picked up his helmet, and we brought him to the entranceway of 90 West, and we opened up his coat and started giving him CPR as other guys ran to get a EMT paramedic and an ambulance, and I remained at 90 West working on Danny, and finally we got a stretcher.

We got him on the stretcher. We got an oxygen bag valve and off they went. I remained, though, at 90 West. I did remember having his helmet, and his helmet was split on top, and I put it to the side, and I know the guys -- I heard were looking for that later on. That was the last time I saw it. I remember at that time we packaged him, and he went.

I heard a rumor that Father Judge came over, but I didn't see him. I heard that Father Judge was perhaps on West and Vesey. No way he could have been on West and Liberty, but nonetheless, Danny made it to

T. JULIAN

an ambulance, and our guys came back, 205, so now it was 216, 205, I think 217, and I'm not quite sure what happened to 217 and 216. I know two guys from 216 are missing, I believe. I'm thinking they ran across into 2 World.

We're are figuring now we were obviously in danger, falling debris zone. I remember standing on the corner of Cedar and Washington, putting my mask back on, getting my roll-up. I had an extra bottle, and my back to the trade tower. I'm in a bad spot here, you know.

I remember walking back to 90 West. 205, we regrouped together, Lieutenant Hayes, Clancy, Murray and myself, and at that point -- and there was a photographer from the Daily News, who now gave me a picture that I just showed to you, which I'm going to keep with my own (inaudible.)

Anyhow, I remember seeing him then at that point, and a building maintenance guy from 90 West came out, and he was waving us in. "Guys, come through this way."

And Lieutenant Hayes was contemplating finding a subway entrance through one of the buildings -- probably Bankers Trust or 90 West, if they had one

T. JULIAN

-- so we could get into 2 World Trade and work our way up. We figured it was dangerous in the street.

Q. Right.

A. So we cut through 90 West. The guy -- security maintenance guy pointed us out to, I guess, Albany Street, and we popped out that door, and we headed east again. I remember the photographer. He says he went west.

I don't know what happened, again, to 216 and 122. We came out from 90 West, made a left, headed east, and right when we got to the corner of Washington and Albany, that's when I heard the building collapse.

First I thought it was an explosion. I thought maybe there was a bomb on the plane, but delayed type of thing, you know, secondary device.

Q. I was convinced for a week it was secondary devices.

A. You know, and I just heard like an explosion and a then a cracking type of noise, and then it sounded like a freight train, rumbling and picking up speed, and I remember I looked up, and I saw it coming down, and I was able to make it across Washington to the very corner of Washington and Albany. I think it's the south side of Bankers Trust building.

T. JULIAN

I made it right to the corner, and there's a column right there, and I was with my guys. We all made it to like the column, and I remember it was plate glass behind me, and I'm thinking I'm going to get hit by this glass and like a porcupine. I'm going to get it, you know, but nonetheless, it rumbled.

It was the loudest rumbling I ever heard. The ground shook, and I got thrown down, and I remember it just got black, and I got knocked down. I remember being buried. I think I ducked more or less, you know, pieces of metal -- something hit me, not that heavy, though. Wasn't an I beam or else I wouldn't be talking to you, and I remember that being on me, and I kind of -- I was able to stand up and push everything off me, but now I felt like I was in the street or the sidewalk, and it was hot, smoky. I felt like I was in a fire, and I remember digging my way out. A lot of cementation, powdery insulation, whatever you want to call it. Almost like being in a blizzard with some metal debris right on me. Fortunately nothing heavy hit me.

I got my mask on, and I found my extra cylinder. I figured I need that, and I was looking for the building, 90 West, and I found it, put my

T. JULIAN

flashlight on, and I found 90 West, and I was just about to smash the window of 90 West to get inside, and right when I did it, I felt a hand grab me and pull me in the doorway, and I think it was Engine 220, a lieutenant. I don't know who he was. He grabbed me.

I told him I was with 205, and we started hollering for each other, and we went into 90 West, and we kind of regrouped. We were missing Clancy for a short while, but we finally found him. He went into another building. Somebody else found him, and the ironic part is 90 West is now being collapsed on and is on fire. No, I'm sorry. Bankers Trust, and we're inside taking refuge.

We figured safer in there than in the street, but we figured once we regrouped and kind of calmed down, we took our masks off, and we talked to each other. It was kind of, like, all right, let's head back either West Street or, you know, head south a block.

So now originally we were with 220 engine. We got our act together. We went across Albany Street to the next building. I'm not sure what building that was, and we cut through that building. Now, it's two engine companies. We got no tools. I had my extra

T. JULIAN

cylinder. I don't know if it was -- once we got in that side, but on the next street, a car outside. I think it was locked, and I remember breaking the door with a cylinder, and I think we went -- I don't know whether we went one more block to Rector. I don't remember. I know we cut through at least two buildings south, directly right through, and then we popped out on, I think, Rector and made it up to, I guess, Greenwich. I'm not sure if it was -- I think it was Trinity. We made it to Trinity.

Looking for our rig, we figured we'd head back to our rig, find our chauffeur, or even the command post, whatever we had to do, you know, and at that point the second building collapsed. I heard the same exact noise all over again. It was just a little further away, and there was people in the street.

We kind of heard them, people on the street wandering around in shock. We were like kind of hurrying them to get inside, get inside, and people had minor cuts and bleeding. I saw faces in a doorway on Trinity. I don't remember the address. 61 Trinity or whatever it was. Probably Trinity and Rector. It was the building right there.

I remember I saw people inside. We ran in

T. JULIAN

there thinking let's get these people off the street in there and figure out what our next move is. And then the second building collapsed, and it was like a big wave again, a woosh, paper, and debris, and powder, and fire and smoke.

And at that point we were inside, and as it turned out, there were people in the building who wanted to leave, and we talked them in to staying, and we were trying to reassure them. Some people had cell phones. The phones were working. We told the people call your families. They helped us out. They gave us water. We washed our eyes out, towels.

I remember I called my fiancée. We're married now, but called her, and she works at [REDACTED], and I got her machine. Now, it's about -- do you know what time the second building collapsed?

Q. The second building collapsed at exactly 10:20?

A. 10:29 or something?

Q. 10:29.

A. 10:20? SO this is probably like 10:45, 10:35, you know.

Q. Right.

A. And I remember calling her and my mother, and

T. JULIAN

I got both their machines, so now I'm thinking New York just got bombed by, you know -- so we kind of regrouped, washed our eyes out. They were caked, you know, ended up getting conjunctivitis.

Q. Sure.

A. After that, but anyhow we regrouped, got our stuff together, and we headed back to Liberty and Trinity, and we found our rig, and we couldn't find our chauffeur, Tom Boccarossa, but we ran into some of our guys that off duty, came in, came across, and it collapsed, and they just escaped the collapse from -- they were on their way to the area, and so they experienced pretty much what we experienced.

So we all kind of teamed up. We saw our rig. We got our rig from corner the of Trinity. It was buried. The windows were blown out. There was a couple of car fires going on. We moved some stuff out of the way. Richie Murray drove it. He jumped in it. He turned it around, headed south, and then he headed west. I don't know if it was Rector. Probably Rector Street. We cut back to West Street, went north again.

I remember we made it to about the Marriott, south of -- to Carlyle and West, and we made it to there, and at that point they were starting to stretch

T. JULIAN

lines into 90 West, was pretty much going, and we stretched the line in there, and we were helping out, and it was just chaos everywhere.

Stretching a line here, help over here.

There were guys setting up a hose to the draft from the river, and I actually knew a captain, Richie Weldon. He was a lieutenant at 74 engine when I was there, and I remember helping stretch like 3 1/2 for little awhile, and I remember going back to our guys, and we stretched a line into 90 West, and that was getting shitty, and they backed us out of there, and then we got an order to set up in the Marriott with a couple of other companies or on Albany. I guess between Albany and Carlyle, there was a Marriott right there.

We ended up walking up 40 flights of stairs with our roll-ups in the Marriott, and we brought a stang as well. Another company -- we were was taking turns carrying, and we made it to like 37, 38, 39. We set up at the windows on the north side and the roof, you know, multi-versile. The water pressure was horrible, and we were just shooting water on 90 West pretty much the rest of the day. That's where I spent most -- I spent the rest of the day, and then finally we got relieved maybe around -- I guess like 7, and we

T. JULIAN

walked back down 40 flights of stairs, and our rig got ravaged, all our tools and flashlights. Everything you had left on the rig, gone. Mask --

Q. Sure.

A. And at that point, I remember heading over to West, I guess West and Liberty again, and just starting to search, and plough, you know, and I must have been there for a couple of hours. I don't think I had a watch on. I think that threw me off that day. Maybe I was better off, but I remember it was around eleven o'clock that night, me and a couple of guys, we walked to the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge, and we started getting rides from PD vans, you know, a car going over, and I don't know if it was that night.

One of the nights, New York, Manhattan trustee, Rudy SanFilippo -- I could be mistaken. Maybe it wasn't the first night, but one of the nights I was working, he gave me a ride over the Brooklyn Bridge, but I think the first night a police car -- I hopped in the trunk literally exhausted. I was covered in shit.

Q. Definitely.

A. My eyes were --

Q. Gone.

A. Shot, burnt, red, and made it back to the

T. JULIAN

firehouse. That was the first night pretty much. I mean, Lieutenant Hayes -- I mean, traffic, we got delayed. Lieutenant Hayes made us go around to Albany, and then after Danny got hit, I really thought he got hit by debris, but the rumor was he got hit by a body. I didn't see it.

I know he was hit, obviously. It killed him. At the time we were working on him, I really didn't think he was gone, but I was obviously in denial. You know, you just want to help, but we helped 216 trying to help him, take the latest -- again, the clock's ticking, the bus, and then the guy from 90 West suggested we cut through. Lieutenant Hayes was, like, let's find a subway entrance to go underground into 2 and work our way up.

He was smart. He was thinking. There was a lot of chaos, and he kept his head, and 205, we stuck together. We bumped into other companies along the way, but I really believe that Tom Hayes -- you know, he made a couple of decisions right there that --

Q. That were right.

A. I'm still talking to you.

Q. That's true, sure.

A. And we all kept our heads, and we stayed

T. JULIAN

together, and we had an idea if we stuck together, and with Hayes, you know. We worked as a team and I believe he saved my life.

Q. Sure. It was not a day where you knew what decision to make.

A. No.

Q. It was --

A. Especially when there was a collapse, there's a fire. There was a car fire. Like, what do you do first?

Q. Exactly. Plus as part of the event, your thought process takes a little bit of what you're actually seeing, because you don't believe what you're seeing.

A. Right.

Q. When you're seeing those towers come down.

A. I never thought they would come down.

Q. No, it's amazing. It's --

A. I knew we were going to have a bad situation, maybe a partial collapse, you know, whatever, but never the whole thing. No way. I was in construction many years before this.

Q. No, nobody had any idea that was going to happen, obviously.

T. JULIAN

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: That concludes the
interview. It's approximately 1305.

File No. 9110387

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER VINCENT PLOVER

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF MC GRATH: The date is December 26, 2001. Is time is 0950 hours, and this is Battalion Chief James McGrath of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Vincent Plover, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Vinnie, if you'd please state your name and your company, and just recount for me the events as close as you can remember them.

A. Vincent Plover, Ladder 85. I was in Manhattan working a side job when I heard of the events, and it was after the second tower was struck that I decided to respond, so I went to 18th Street to 14 engine and got a turnout coat and pants, and I responded from there. I was crossing -- I was on 14th Street, and I saw the towers were still up. Both towers were still up at that point, but I lost sight of them as I was going -- I was going to the Westside Highway, and I got up on the Westside Highway, and I parked about seven blocks away to not interfere with traffic, and I got out of my truck, and I started running, and it was then I noticed that there was dust on the ground.

The dust increased, and I didn't know what

V. PLOVER

the dust was, and then when I was about approximately one block north of the tower, because I saw people at the windows -- and so as I stopped, I looked up, and people had begun jumping from the -- and it was standing straight up, but not having seen the damage to the other tower -- a couple more minutes, and see if there was any change.

Approximately four minutes later, myself and the other -- the company that was there and the chief, we started running north, and at that point I headed back down to -- toward where the Trade Center parking lot -- but adjoining the Battery Park City.

So I joined up with a couple of other guys, and there was a pumper there, and I started the pumper and stretched lines, and we cut a hole -- exposed, and they were -- one would light the other one up, and then the gas tanks were blowing, so we started putting out those car fires, and then we got some foam after that. I ran into Ladder 85.

Q. The fellow, from Engine 14, the firefighter from Engine 14 that you were with, do you have his name?

A. Yes, John Dilillo. Now, he responded with 14 engine.

V. PLOVER

Q. Okay.

A. I left him at 14 engine. He would be better off staying with his company, so he responded with them, and he --

Q. Also, the chief that --

A. I have no idea who he was.

Q. Or the company that was there with him?

A. I don't know either. It was just --

Q. The name of the firefighter that was under the car with you?

A. No.

Q. Do you know what company he was?

A. There was a Brooklyn company that I was -- that I was there, and I used to be an engine chauffeur, so --

Q. 9 or 3 give any indication as to where they might be?

A. They -- I remember hearing -- but I understand that they got out.

Q. You didn't know where they were?

A. No.

Q. The radio? They didn't give a location -- you know might help us.

BATTALION CHIEF MC GRATH: Thanks for the

V. PLOVER

interview, then. The time is ten after eight, and
I thank you very much.

THE WITNESS: Thank you, Chief.

File No. 9110388

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PETER FALLUCCA

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF MC GRATH: The date is Wednesday, December 26, 2001. The time is 1125 hours.

This is Battalion Chief James McGrath of the Fire Department of City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Peter Fallucca assigned to Engine 16, now working in Engine 153 in Staten Island.

It will be regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Pete, if just say your name and your company, and then in your own words, kind of relate everything that you can remember from when you received the alarm up through the collapses.

A. All right. My name is Peter Fallucca, assigned to Engine 153 in Staten Island. On September 11, I was on rotation in Engine 16 in Manhattan.

Starting right from the very beginning, I was in the house watch, sitting in the house watch at quarters of Engine 16. I heard it come over on the scanner. I heard -- I was actually sitting in the house watch. I actually heard -- sounded like the plane flew over our quarters, and I said to myself, I said, that sounds low for Manhattan for a plane to be

P. FALLUCCA

flying so low, and then two seconds later it came over on the scanner.

I heard the guy say, "A plane just hit the World Trade tower. Send every available ambulance you got," I heard him say on the scanner. My lieutenant came running in. He said, "Did you hear that? Did you hear that?" I said "Yeah. He said a plane just hit the trade center," and we knew we were going to get sent in on that.

We suited up, and within two minutes, we were sent on the third alarm. We were on our way down there. We took the FDR Drive, and we could see the first building that was hit on the FDR Drive, and you could see an enormous hole in the side of the building from the FDR Drive, the first building that got hit.

You could see all the papers flying around it, all the -- you know, I guess the stationary from all the offices. When I first looked, I thought it was seagulls flying. There was so many, looked like seagulls at the dump, and we got down there, and as we are pulling in, we're getting into the side streets closer to the trade center, the people were lining the streets. All civilians lining the streets, you know, packed with people.

P. FALLUCCA

I think looking at the map, looked like we were on Church. We just were getting ready to pull up, getting ready to get out, and the second plane hit, and we started getting hit with debris on the top of the rig. We were huddled down in the bottom of the rig, because -- I mean, we were getting pelted with some heavy stuff, and at that time I didn't know that it was a second plane.

I just thought it was a secondary explosion from the first building, because I was on the opposite side. I was sitting behind the officer, and I couldn't see really the top of the towers, but the guys that were on that side of the rig, they were able to see, and I heard, "Holy, shit!" You know, he screamed, because he saw this big fireball, and then all the debris.

You heard the explosion and everything, but I saw the big fire ball. The stuff was coming down across the street. It looked like a meteor came flying across the street. They said it was the engine. I don't know what it was. It was a big fireball or something from the plane I guess, came from across the street in front of our rig, and as we get out of the rig, there's a cop, city police officer, in the

P. FALLUCCA

street. He's telling us, "I'm getting out of here. I just saw a rocket." He said he saw it come off the Woolworth Building and hit the tower.

Now I see the two towers are hit. He says, "I just saw a rocket hit that building. I'm getting the F out of here. I'm getting out of here."

And we were like, holy -- I'm saying to myself, I didn't even go in yet. They're shooting rockets. I don't know what we're doing over here, but after I watched it on the news a couple of times, I could see it was a piece of the plane or something flew off the building and made like a -- it looked -- if you didn't see it actually come off the plane, you saw like the stream of smoke coming from one building to the other, but actually came from the tower, and they didn't go the other way, so he swore he saw a rocket, but at the time we thought it was a rocket. We thought -- I thought we were under attack, and we were under attack, naturally, but I thought we were under attack in the city.

You know, I thought guys were in these buildings with rockets shooting at the building, and we made our way in. We got into the lobby of the Tower 1, the first building that got hit. That's where we were

P. FALLUCCA

called up.

Q. So you entered from the courtyard on Church Street?

A. Yeah, we walked through. It was a -- I don't know what building it was, but I remember walking underneath all the scaffolding. They had the scaffolding going over the sidewalks. They must have been doing work on one of them.

I remember walking underneath all of that, and they were telling us, be careful of glass going in, you know, look up before we go in this building, make sure there is nothing coming down. There's all kinds of glass and debris.

I remember looking up and seeing people jumping out, civilians jumping out, you know, and that was -- that's something to see, and I remembered as we turned, we got onto West Street, going through the courtyard we came to the entrance on West Street. I could see people jumping out of the second building that got hit, and you could see them hitting the ground and stuff.

I mean, it was a distance, but you could see it, and we got into the lobby of the first -- the north tower, and they were just setting up the command post.

P. FALLUCCA

I seen them coming in with the briefcase they open up. I saw the commissioner in there, Von Essen was in the lobby with us at the time, a couple of chiefs. I don't know who they were, and they weren't getting names.

It wasn't like you see guys shaking hands, hey, how you doing. Everybody was very serious because at this point, we knew we had a problem, and they had sent us -- I think it was the B stairwell. We went up the B stairwell. They hooked us up with another company, going up two companies at a time up the stairwell.

We took our roll-ups, plus extra bottles and stuff. We went up the B stairway, and I think they were going to send us up the 70th Floor. They were looking to establish a communication line. They had those phones in the hallways.

Q. Yes.

A. That's what they were looking -- our assignment was, I guess, to set up a communication line in that stairwell, and we were going up about 10, 12 floors at a time, taking five-minute break. I mean, you walking up, and people were coming down one way, we were going up the other.

Civilians were coming down one side of the

P. FALLUCCA

stairs. We were going up the other. You know, it was very orderly, single file. Nobody was really panicking.

Q. Do you remember the company that was with you?

A. I think they said it was -- it might have been Engine 1. I'm not sure. I really don't remember. I remember talking to the guys after the fact, and they said it was Engine 1, but I personally can't be too sure of that. I don't remember the company, but I know they sent us up with another company to go up, and we went up to -- like I said, we got up to the 10th Floor. We took a break.

People were handing us bottles of water going up, civilians, words of encouragement and all that stuff, good luck, guys. We had a few people -- women crying. There was a light haze inside the stairwell.

Before we got in, all the elevators were crashed down in the lobby, and we were going to the stairwell. See all the elevators were crashed down, big slabs of marble on the floor, all the ceiling tiles of the dropped ceiling was falling down, wires hanging.

You see wires and stuff hanging inside the

P. FALLUCCA

elevator shafts, because the doors were blown right off the elevators. There was one body inside the lobby. Looked like his legs were chopped off. I don't know where he came from, but he had already had a triage tag on him. It was a civilian. I don't know where he came from, how he died. Looked like his clothes were a little burnt up on him, but his legs were chopped off. I don't know where he came from, but he had a triage tag, so somebody must have tagged him before we got there.

So I can remember we started making our way up. We got up about ten floors, and we'd take a break and go up another ten floors. We got up to about the 23rd Floor. We were inside the hallway taking a break, and the whole building shakes. I mean violently, like earthquake shake.

Two seconds later the lights go out, and I hear guys going, oh, shit. I see guys taking off -- firemen, cops. Guys are saying, this building is not supposed to shake like this, and I see guys running down the stairs, running out of the building, and I told my boss.

I said, "I don't know what we're going to do." Usually I don't -- I don't -- I just do whatever

P. FALLUCCA

the boss tells me, but I was asking him. We're under attack. Is that -- we were on the 23rd Floor. There were guys in suits up there on the 23rd Floor. Guys were telling me there were -- the CIA's got offices on the 23rd Floor. I don't know who, but it could have been building super. They had a lot of information, these guys were giving us.

They had told us that the Pentagon was hit. This was while we were sitting on the 23rd Floor. The Pentagon is hit. They hit another place in Washington. They shot a plane down, and as we were on the 23rd Floor taking a break, they telling us, fellows, we just got a report of a third plane headed this way, so when the building shook, like that, I figured we got hit with another plane, but we found out later that was the first building, Tower 2. That was the one that was collapsed, so that's what we found out. That's what that was.

And the lights went out, and I was saying -- to me it seemed like about five minutes. I heard on the radio Mayday, to get out. Everybody out of the building. All personnel out of the building, and I started -- I just started coming down, and I lost my lieutenant. I couldn't find my lieutenant.

P. FALLUCCA

One of the guys I think in our unit, he went down before they gave the order to go down. The only one I had with me was -- one of the 14 probies was with me. It was me and him, and we were looking for the lieutenant, calling the lieutenant on the radio. Couldn't find him. He wasn't answering me. I was yelling up the stairs.

We went down four floors at a time, and we waited. I waited for him to go down, and then we got down to the lobby, and I waited for him. He still never came down. I was calling him on the radio, and then I saw one of the other guys in our unit, the senior guy. He's got about 17, 18 years on the job. I told the probie, "Sean," I said, "Let's follow Timmy." I said, "Let's regroup with him, see what he wants to do."

He was helping carry a woman with a couple of other guys in a chair downstairs, so we walked with him. We helped him carry the chair, put the woman in the ambulance, and it was the three of us together -- me, Timmy Marmion, Sean Brown, together.

We walked down to -- I guess we got down to about -- it was the first block. We got down to Vesey Street. It was the first block. Yeah, Vesey. We had

to be on Vesey, and I took my tank off, because I figured now I'm clear of all this debris falling down. I said "We're out. We're not going back in any more till we regroup any way."

And there was an EMT walking down the street. He was carrying a chief. The chief was bleeding from the head, and Sean Brown called me. He said he grabbed the other shoulder of the chief, and he helped carry the chief to the ambulance. I told Sean, "Make sure you come back here. Meet back here. This way all three of us are together," because we didn't know.

The chauffeur was still out on the street somewhere. We didn't know where our chauffeur was. The lieutenant, we had no idea where he was. As far as we now knew, he was still in the building, and one other guy was missing. Let me see.

He starts walking with the chief to get him in the ambulance. Me and Timmy were standing right under. We just took our tanks off and our jackets off, and that's when the second building came down. It came down right behind us.

So now we started running down West Street towards Stuyvesant High School. Take a peek behind.

You could see this black cloud coming behind you. You couldn't out run it, and you get caught in that black, and I felt like the push, you know, from this black cloud, and I got myself to the first building before Stuyvesant High School, and I seen guys go inside there, and I made the turn around the building, and I went inside that building, because, I mean, you couldn't see your hand in front of your face.

I was feeling the wall of the building to feel my way into the building, and we went inside the building. We looked outside the window. It looked like midnight at ten o'clock in the morning.

And then as it settled, we came out, and we were trying to regroup with the guys. We found Sean again, who helped the chief into an ambulance, and it was just the three of us for awhile, and we wound up finding our chauffeur, and then we wound up getting -- we had everybody together except for the officer. The officer wound up still being in the building.

He was with Ladder 6 on the 4th Floor. He survived. He was in the building, and we tried -- we asked the chief. They wouldn't let us go back in. Once we were out, they said, "You guys were in there already. You're not going back in." They wouldn't let

P. FALLUCCA

us go back in because we were looking, you know, both buildings had went down at this point, and we were going to see if we could pull people out, find anybody still that was alive, and they wouldn't let us go back in. They said, "You guys are done."

So we sat around, and one of the other guys had something in his eye. As you're sitting there, you feel -- a burning in my chest. I had mud caked up in my mouth from inhaling all this stuff. I mean, I ate it, never mind inhaled it, and guys came over, anybody want to go to the hospital, get checked out.

So the guy who had scratches, he said he was going. I said, you know what, they're not letting us go back in. Let me go get checked out.

And I went -- they took me to St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital and checked me out, and they sent me back to my house a few hours later, and I stayed at the firehouse answering phones.

Q. Just a few questions.

You mentioned that your officer was with Ladder 6, and that you had a radio on.

Did you hear any of the transmissions from Ladder 6?

A. No, I didn't hear anything from Ladder 6, but

P. FALLUCCA

on my way down, I heard one transmission that I do remember was from Rescue 1. I heard the boss from Rescue 1 telling all Rescue 1 members, meet up on the 40 floor.

When I was going -- that was when they gave the order to get out. I was on my way down. I don't know what floor I was on when I heard it, but it was fairly high. Had to be like in the high teens, maybe 20th Floor, just as I was starting to go down.

They were telling us to go down, and I heard Rescue 1 say to meet up, all rescue one members meet up on the 40th Floor, and I know all those guys are no longer with us any more, so they were somewhere headed to the 40th Floor, I would imagine, those guys.

Q. As far as --

A. I heard Maydays given for guys -- guys -- I heard of guys passing out. Still missing members I heard. This is before anything had collapsed.

Q. Can you remember any specifics, any specific companies?

A. No, I remember hearing that they found the boss from Engine 1. I remember hearing, found an officer from Engine 1, possibly DOA. I remember hearing that on the radio, but the only real one I can

P. FALLUCCA

remember where guys were going was Rescue 1. I heard them say meet up on the 40th Floor. I heard that transmission for Rescue 1.

Q. And the highest floor that your company, Engine 16 got to, was the 23rd?

A. 23rd Floor. And we were going to go higher, but at that time they had ordered us out, and we went down. Like I said, I lost -- I mean, there was at that point, there was mass chaos. Guys were going up, guys were going down.

My officer, I don't know if he went on one of the floors, but however -- he wound up on the 4th Floor. When I was coming down, I never saw him. I wound up seeing an officer from 65 engine -- like I know those guys, because you get detailed in the same battalion, and I asked him.

I said, "Did you see Lieutenant Cross?" Lieutenant Cross was my lieutenant that day. I said, "Did you see Lieutenant Cross?" And he said, "Yeah, I saw him. He's on his way down." He even told me they want everybody out of the building. Start heading down. I said, "Are you sure you saw him go down?" Because I thought maybe this guy is looking for me. I don't want this guy to get killed looking for me.

P. FALLUCCA

And he said, "No, I saw him. He's on his way down," and I said, "You sure?" He said, "Yeah, he's on his way down. Come on, let's start going down." That was Piambino from 65 engine. He told me that. So I said all right.

I went down to the lobby, and I was standing in the lobby. At that point, the lobby was a ghost town. There was nobody in the lobby. There was no more command center in the lobby. There was nothing.

Every window in the place on the bottom floor was broken. When we first got there, just the windows when we went in there were broken, but the windows in the back of the lobby were -- there wasn't a window in the bottom of the lobby, and it was empty, the lobby. I didn't see anybody, and, I mean, you just had the guys -- trails of guys, dribs and drabs of guys coming down the stairways coming out of the building. That was it.

I mean, I saw all these guys. I remember seeing all the rigs in front of the building. There were rugs underneath that north bridge, because when I got -- we put the woman in the ambulance, when we came out, the ambulance was parked under the north bridge. I don't know if they ever made it out alive or not, if

P. FALLUCCA

they survived or not.

Q. Do you remember any of the companies that were parked under there?

A. I remember seeing -- when we were going in, I remember seeing 6 truck, because I remember seeing them -- they got the tiller rig with the dragon on it, and a friend of mine that I worked with over here, he had just transferred to 6 truck. He was working that day at 6 truck, and I remember seeing Squad 18 going in.

Who else? I remember seeing 6 truck going in when we first went in. They were parked right in front just past the north bridge.

Q. As people were exiting the building with you, was everybody going north or were some going south?

A. I think people were going any which way they could get out pretty much, and then we got out, and we went north because we had the woman. I followed Timmy at that point. I was following the senior guy in the engine at that point.

I couldn't find the lieutenant, so I said let's go with him. You know what I mean? I got two years on the job. I figured he's the best shot. I don't know whatever he wanted to do. I mean, if he

P. FALLUCCA

would have said, come on, we're going back in the building, I probably would have went back in the building.

I was just at that point -- I was lost, to be honest. I didn't know what to do. We left our roll-ups and our -- I had the standpipe position at that point, and I left all that up on the 23rd Floor. I just took my tank with me.

When they told us to get out, that was our only order. I didn't know what to do. I knew we weren't going to put a fire out over there. It was roaring. You could see from the FDR. You could see the thing was going, thick, black smoke. You could see floors of fire. I mean, you see it on the news. You could see the whole thing was burning.

We went with him, and that's where it pretty much ended for us until I got caught in that cloud of debris when it hit, that cloud, you know, blowing all over the place, but that was it.

Q. Is there anything else that you can think of that might be pertinent?

A. When I came out, all the people that I saw in the lobby, I remember seeing a guy filming in the lobby. There was a guy with a video camera in the

P. FALLUCCA

lobby filming.

Q. Fireman? Civilian?

A. He look like -- you know, might have been a light-duty guy. He looked like he had a firemen uniform, but he didn't have bunker gear on. He just had the coat on and blue pants. It looked like a fireman, but it didn't look like -- he wasn't wearing -- he didn't have bunker gear on, and he wasn't wearing a helmet. Just he had a camera, and I remember him filming with a camera, and it wasn't like the amateur ones. It looked like a professional looking camera that he had.

I remember guys -- when we got out, I had heard that the other building collapsed, but I didn't know the extent of the collapse. I thought maybe it was a partial collapse, part of it broke off, floors collapsed, and I can remember coming out and seeing, you know, the ribs to the towers sticking in the street, but the front of West Street in front of the north tower was clear.

I walked out and didn't have a problem. There was nothing in my way to walk out. Just that layer of powder in the street, four to six inches of powder, that dust or whatever it was, papers and stuff

P. FALLUCCA

like that in the street. That was it.

When you see people coming -- like I said, everybody was coming down. There were firemen coming down when I came down, but nothing that I can remember vividly.

Even all the civilians, I only remember one civilian because I saw him on the news. He was the blind guy with the dog. That is the only one -- if I had to pick somebody out of a lineup, I could probably pick that guy out of the lineup, because I remember petting the dog on the way up. He said the seeing-eye dog coming down the stairs.

That's the only guy, but otherwise, I can't remember too much faces. Two years on the job, you don't know that many people. I was on the rotation. I was only there just under a year, so I recognized the guys that were in the battalion, you know, cause you get detailed, but the rescue, I did hear that transmission about the rescue, and I remember hearing the transmission about finding the officer from Engine 1, but that was it.

I remember seeing some people jumping and pretty much...

BATTALION CHIEF MC GRATH: I want to thank

P. FALLUCCA

you very much for the interview. I'm sure some of the information will be very, very helpful.

The time is 11:46. This interview took place in the quarters of Engine 153 in Staten Island.

File No. 9110391

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD MECNER

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: It's 1609 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview at this time with fireman first grade Edward Mecner, Engine 5. The interview concerns the events of September 11th, 2001. We are in the office at Engine 5. There is nobody else in the office. What follows now is the interview.

A. I was getting off a 24. I worked Monday morning a tour, and I was on mutual I think Monday night. I was supposed to be getting off Tuesday morning at about 8:20 or 8:15 -- maybe about 8:00 Lieutenant Mitchell asked if there's a bagel shop. We got some bagels; we sat down.

Approximately 8:30 we got a run. Lieutenant Paul Mitchell was relieved, as was Firefighter Burnside from Ladder 20. They had early relief. Someone came in already. We responded to a run at 8:30 on Irving Place and 19th Street.

I think it was a 10-33, smoke in the area, some general false alarm or something.

From there we were directed -- they said that there was an explosion at the Trade Center. We were directed to go directly there.

I was the chauffeur that day. I started driving up 14th Street. I was going to turn left on Broadway. The member who ended up being missing, Firefighter Delvalle, said to take the west side. So I continued up 14th Street.

As we approached Sixth Avenue when you look south, you could see a big cloud of smoke, and at every big intersection, Seventh Avenue and Eighth Avenue, so forth, going West down 14th Street, you could see a big plume of smoke. So we knew this was something very serious.

We got on the west side, and we made it down in the general area of downtown Manhattan and the Trade Center area. We parked the rig on West Street maybe three blocks north of Vesey. There were other rigs there, so we couldn't really get much further.

The members of Engine 5 grabbed their rollups and irons, extra cylinders, which is procedure for a high-rise fire, and they proceeded down West Street going towards the

north tower.

At that point I put my gear on out of the chauffeur's compartment. I grabbed a spare set of irons. I went down and I saw a chauffeur from 15 Engine and asked if he needed any help. He was on West and I think Vesey Street. He said he's okay. All the chauffeurs seemed to be okay.

So I caught up with Engine 5, and we proceeded up I think stairway A. On approximately the third floor, someone said to go over and cross over to stairway C, that there's not as many people coming down the stairs, it will be easier to make our way up.

We did that on about the third floor. We headed up to the tenth floor. I think we took a short break. We went up, and we stopped on the 13th floor while everybody stopped and took a rest on 13. There was a water cylinder, and we all took a drink of water. Everybody said we're ready to go up again, so we started going up.

We made it as far as 19. One of our members, Derek Brogan, started complaining of chest pains. We stopped at 19 and rested a moment. He said he felt better. We made our way

up to approximately the 23rd floor, where we stopped again. He started having recurrent chest pains.

That's where I also saw some members of Engine 10 that I knew by name and a couple members of Ladder 9. One of them was also having some difficulty breathing and chest pains.

Also at that point I guess someone called for Port Authority ESU. I guess the ESU Port Authority guys brought up some oxygen, and I believe they gave it to Don Casey of 9 Truck, who I saw. I saw Bruce Springstead from 9 Truck. Engine 10 members, I saw Mitch Castiglione and another member, I can't remember his name, all who made it out of the building, because I saw them later on.

While we were on the 23rd floor, at one point I took off Don Casey's coat. I saw that he was having a hard time breathing. Derek's coat we took off, his turnout, because he was having the chest pains. I figured just to get the heat off him. It was pretty hot carrying all the stuff up. We found some water.

Then within a minute or two, it sounded

like a missile was about to come through the windows, I guess maybe on every floor, but it sounded like it was going to come right through the 23rd floor. Everyone automatically just hit the deck, like you do in a war movie.

We heard a crash and the ground shaking, and everybody kind of like -- when we realized we were okay, everybody kind of got up and were wondering what was going on.

In a minute or two -- there was an order to evacuate. I don't know who gave the order. It was a verbal order. It wasn't over the radio. I didn't have my radio at that point.

Q. Where was your radio?

A. I left it on the rig when I was changing into my gear. I just put it there. In a hurry to catch up with the rest of Engine 5, I left it in the rig. I believe later on Richie Carletti, who came with Tom Lynn from Engine 5, they found 5 Engine and they saw my radio and he knew when he saw the radio and that the chauffeur's compartment was empty that I went in also.

At that point after the crash and the

evacuate order, we began to descend the stairs. At about the fourth floor, there was a blockage. They couldn't make it across. Someone said to follow him, go across back to stairway A, I believe it was.

We crossed the hallway on maybe the fourth floor or third, something like that, to stairway A. We got down to the lobby level. Lieutenant Bohack was there, Derek Brogan, Jimmy Andruzzi and myself.

Now we were looking for Gerard Gorman, who was on the 23rd floor. We saw him with us, and he didn't come down. We waited about a minute, and Lieutenant Bohack gave us an order to get out of the building.

We headed out on the west side towards West Street. There was either a construction worker or ironworker waving us out of the building, constantly looking up, ready to run at any second to get out of the building. So we didn't look up. We just ran towards West Street and where we had Engine 5 parked. So we ran in that direction.

(Interruption.)

A. At that point we walked up towards the rig, and then I believe they said to start running because the building was coming down. So we ran again towards the rig. I guess the south tower fell at that point. Maybe it already fell. I'm not sure.

Q. The south tower was the one that fell and shook while you guys were upstairs.

A. That must have come down already.

Q. That came down.

A. So at that point the other building was getting ready to come down, and they said run. So we ran towards the rig. I got in the rig. I had to back it out of the street, the way it was parked. I couldn't see, because it was kind of cloudy and there were still people running.

Then Rich Carletti got in. My eyes were full of dust and stuff, so he got in and he backed the rig out. We parked it up another two blocks north. I don't remember the street now.

I made sure --

CHIEF MALKIN: I have to stop the interview to remove cell phones that are here. It's 1617 hours right now.

(Pause.)

CHIEF MALKIN: 1618 hours the interview resumes.

A. The north tower started to come down, and we ran north maybe at this point five blocks north of Vesey Street. I saw Derek Brogan in an ambulance, the member that was having the chest pains. I asked him for his home number. I told him I would call his wife if I can.

I walked up the street with some civilians. I was just assisting them. We were walking up, and I was asking them their names and so forth. People were trying to get through on cell phones. They couldn't.

I got Derek's wife's number. I wrote it down. I asked him if he saw Gerard. He said he did see Gerard Gorman, the member we were looking for that was on the 23rd floor with us. He said that he's also in an ambulance and he was taken to the hospital; I don't know which one.

I was able to get to a factory building or there was a business -- I don't recall what it was. They let me use their phone, and I got through to Derek's wife. I left a message saying

he's okay, that he's in St. Vincent's, he's okay.

Q. You talked directly to her?

A. No.

Q. You think it was a machine?

A. I think it was a machine. So I just left a message saying Derek's okay. He's being taken to St. Vincent's Hospital, but he's okay. I think I asked for her to call if she gets the message, because we're having trouble getting through, to give my wife a call and say it's okay. I gave her the number. I believe I also was able to get through to my brother-in-law and tell him call everybody and say I'm okay.

I came back out of the building. I found Lieutenant Bohack at the rig, Rich Carletti, Jimmy Andruzzi. We repositioned the rig on Church Street and I think around Liberty. We were looking for some hydrants that we could use. Most of the hydrants were out. Our rig was one of the few that was in operation at that point.

We parked near I think Brooks Brothers. There's a store on Church Street. We found a hydrant that was out. There was a tower ladder

trying to get in position, so we were assisting with that. When we couldn't find any good hydrants, we walked the perimeter of both towers, looking to see if there was someone in charge, something to do.

At that point Jimmy said he wanted to find his brother. He did see him, saw that he was okay. So then he came back and stayed with us the rest of the time.

For the rest of the day we were mostly around Church Street in front of Brooks Brothers. I think it's south of Vesey Street a block or two. We were generally in that area trying to get water out of maybe some of the standpipes in the buildings. Then they said that the 47 story hotel building -- I think it's number seven -- was about to come down.

We were around for the rest of the afternoon. At about 5:30 that did come down. We were in the area, so we ran down the street again. We ran east down whatever street we were on and ran east towards Broadway.

Q. Would the map help you locate what street were on? Let me show you this map. This

is the north tower. This is Vesey Street, and seven is here. So where were you in relation to seven when it came down?

A. Well, Trinity and Church actually turn into the same street. We were I guess right around Fulton. We might have been on Fulton or Dey Street. We were generally in this area for a lot of the time later on in the afternoon. I guess my rig might have been parked around Warren Street when we first arrived, maybe Murray.

Q. So when seven started to collapse, you guys ran east on Fulton or Dey Street?

A. Fulton or Dey, and we met up around Broadway. At that point it was maybe around 6, after 6, 6:30. We kind of had enough. So I asked the officer if we could get ready to go back. At that point there were plenty of units there.

Jimmy Andruzzi and myself were there at that point for -- well, we worked 24 hours, and plus we were there for another 10 hours or so. That's going into 30-something hours of non-stop.

Q. You were tired?

A. Yeah. Plus we were in the north tower,

and that collapsed. Now this other building is telling you run for your life again. I think we had enough.

Q. You didn't want to wait for the next one?

A. We were there for the two of them. We said at that time we're tired, and they weren't really going to get much more out of us than what we can give.

Q. What did the officer say?

A. He said we're ready to go.

Q. Did you go?

A. Yeah, maybe in about the next 45 minutes. Tommy Lynn was there at that point, Rich Carletti from Engine 5, a couple other members from Engine 5 that arrived sometime in the early afternoon. Wherever they were operating, I don't know. There were units from all over the city. It was hard to determine who was who and where everyone was.

Then we came back.

Q. Came back to quarters?

A. Yeah, in I think a police van or something. They escorted about 15 of us. We all

piled in. When we came back to quarters, it was maybe 8:00 or something, 7:30, 8, and that was the end of the day.

Q. I want to ask you, somebody in the lobby of the north tower ordered Engine 5 to start going upstairs. Were you with Engine 5 at that point in the lobby of the north tower?

A. I just caught up with them.

Q. Just caught up with them?

A. Yeah.

Q. So you didn't see who the chief was that gave the orders to go up or who they spoke to?

A. No. I was just kind of in a hurry to catch up with the members.

Q. You caught up with them. They had been given the orders to start going upstairs?

A. Right.

Q. And you followed along with them.
Okay.

Lobby conditions. Did you notice anything unusual in the lobby when you were there? Was there any fire in the lobby?

A. No.

Q. Did you see the banks of elevators, what the conditions was over that way?

A. I didn't look to see. I just tried to catch up. I saw them and they were headed towards I guess it was stairway A at that point. I just caught up with them and wanted to stay pretty much with them.

Q. Do you remember seeing any other units that were with you or that you passed in the stairway on the way up?

A. The only units I kind of recall seeing were the ones that were on the 19th floor and the 23rd floor. I saw a couple members of Engine 10 and the other members of Ladder 9 and a few Port Authority ESU units. That was about it. I don't remember seeing any other companies that I remember at this point.

That was it.

Q. That's about it?

A. Yeah. I think like Manny Delvalle at some point maybe around the tenth floor, after the tenth or 13th floor, I don't remember seeing him on 19 or 23. I think he was assisting a civilian. The last time I saw him was maybe

around the 13th floor.

Q. Is he missing?

A. He's missing, right.

Q. On the way up, he stayed behind, assisting a civilian, and you got separated?

A. I guess so, because when we were walking up the stairs, all turnouts look the same. You're just kind of walking up the line, and civilians were coming down the stairway as well. I asked a few what floor they came from, and I recall someone saying 84. One of the civilians said 84.

I saw a restaurant worker. I asked him if he worked at Windows on the World, and he said no, he works in the sky lobby. I guess there's a restaurant, someplace up on 44 or 46, wherever the sky lobby is.

Q. You guys were going up the A stairway, that you recall?

A. We started off I believe in the A. At some point someone said there's less people in the C stairway, so we crossed over on around the third or fourth floor to the C stairway. Then we went up.

Coming down it was pretty much the same thing. We started down I believe in C, and then on the third or fourth floor there was a problem. There was something stuck in a hallway. We couldn't get down, couldn't continue down that stairwell. We crossed over to the A. Someone said this way, and we went down to A.

Then we went to the lobby where we waited for -- we were waiting for Gerard Gorman at that point. He was the last guy we saw that wasn't with us. Then Lieutenant Bohack gave the order to get out of the building. We waited another minute, and then we did. A few minutes later it came coming down.

That was pretty much it.

CHIEF MALKIN: It is now 1627 hours. I want to thank Fireman Mecner for this interview. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110392

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM GREEN

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: 1400 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Fireman First Grade William Green of Engine 6. We're at the quarters of Engine 6. There's nobody else in the room. The interview concerns the events of September 11th, 2001. What follows is the interview.

A. We were returning from an EMS run, and we pulled up to the intersection of Rose Street and Avenue of the Finest. That's right next to One Police Plaza. That's when we heard a loud explosion.

We were looking around. We didn't know where it came from. It was loud. A police officer pointed to the north tower of the World Trade Center. We looked up there, and we saw a hole, maybe about three stories wide, a jagged hole, somewhere in the eighties in the north wall of One World Tower. We thought it was a bomb.

We started responding. Lieutenant gave a second alarm because the exterior skin was damaged, and I believe he also transmitted a 10-60. We started responding to the World Trade

Center.

We had to make a left on Gold and a right on Beekman. The firehouse is located at 49 Beekman Street. Two firefighters came out from the house. They were scheduled to work a day tour, Firefighter Bill Johnston and Firefighter Bob Emans. They jumped on the rig, and we started responding to One World Trade.

When we got over to Church Street and Vesey, the street was packed with people. There was actually people gridlock in the street, thousands of people. The apparatus actually had to slowly plow the people out of the way so we could respond.

The rig stopped first on Vesey right in front of Seven World Trade. There was a lot of debris on the ground there. Then we continued to the front of One World Trade. We made a left on West Street, heading in the wrong direction of the northbound lanes on West Street.

The chauffeur positioned the apparatus right underneath what would be the north pedestrian covered bridge that connects Six World Trade with One World Financial Center. The

chauffeur took a hydrant, and we grabbed our rollups off the rig and proceeded into One World Trade.

There were people jumping out of the building at that point. They looked like they were landing on top of Six World Trade. Everyone was saying, "Let's get in. Let's get in before we get hit by the people." We ran into the building. It was me, Paul Beyer, Bill Johnston, Tom Holohan, and we had a covering officer, Lieutenant O'Hagan.

We entered in through the front doors of the lobby. The lobby was screwed. All the windows were already broken. Marble walls that surrounded the elevator shaft, they were cracked and broken.

Lieutenant O'Hagan, he reported in to the fire command station. We stood fast where we normally stand fast, basically right by the core there or just outside the core. There were some turnstiles that you had to go through to get like towards the core.

Lieutenant O'Hagan reported in. In a few moments he came up and said, "Okay, we're

going to head up the B staircase." I'm still thinking a bomb went off.

I'm sorry, I forgot something. When we pulled up in front of -- when we first saw the building with the hole, when we saw the hole, it looked like a jagged hole about three stories high and wide. A bunch of papers had flown out. We thought it was a bomb.

When we got over there, just before I entered the building, I took a look up and I could see two exposures, almost three exposures. There were multiple floors on fire on three exposures I could see.

Just as we started towards the elevators, we were going to go for the B staircase. There were handy talky transmissions saying it's confirmed, airplane crash on the 86th floor.

So I thought to myself possibly it was an accident with a small Cessna or something. Or possibly it was a terrorist attack, they had a Cessna packed with TNT. I did not know it was a jetliner, nor did, I think, any members of my crew.

We headed for the B staircase. It was pretty much in the center of the core. We had to go through these turnstiles. I remember there was a lot of rubble on the floor there. There was elevator doors ajar. There were elevator doors missing. I could see an elevator car twisted in the shaft.

I remember I looked up at the ceiling because I thought maybe the ceiling got charred because there was a bunch of rubble on the floor. It was about three feet high in the middle. The ceiling wasn't charred. So I had thought the floor blew up.

I was telling guys afterwards the floor must have blown up. Maybe there was a bomb downstairs or something. But I came to learn that that was bodies. We had to climb over and around this pile.

Q. A pile of bodies, in the lobby?

A. I didn't recognize it as bodies. I don't know if my mind didn't see it.

Q. Burned?

A. Burned.

Q. Near the elevators?

A. It looked like rubble to me.

Q. Right.

A. Right outside the elevators, in the core. We had to climb up and around it -- it was like three feet high in the middle -- to enter the B staircase.

We entered the B staircase. I believe on the first story it was like a metal security gate on the first story. It's like someone couldn't hop up the stairs, and there was a gate that was open.

People were coming down. People were evacuating. We were heading up. The staircase was narrow. It was only two people wide. We were telling them, "Stay to the right. Stay to the right." We started heading up. I remember water flowing down the stairs like a rapid river, maybe the first ten stories. Then the water seemed to stop.

We were heading up, telling people to stay to the right. People were cheering us, saying, "The firemen are here. The firemen are here." They're patting us on the back. The higher we got, we started seeing injured people.

People were burned.

Approximately when we got to the 14th floor I heard a handy talky transmission, "Another plane! Another plane!" A little rumble. "Another plane just hit the south tower." That's what I heard on the handy talky.

We continued up. At the 17th floor my company was waiting for me, took a blow. We went into the floor. People were coming down. Other firemen were maybe behind us going up. They were taking blows at different floors.

My whole company regrouped on that 17th floor. We uncovered a little bit. We were sweating, and we were fatigued already. There was a vending machine there with a big glass panel with a bunch of waters in it and stuff, and guys went looking for change. So I took the axe, and I smashed the glass. It took about two or three hard blows. We were laughing.

Q. Oh, you're the guy they're looking for. No, just kidding. Go ahead.

A. We were laughing. We were laughing. We took waters, passed them out to brothers on the floor, passed them out to civilians on the

stairs.

A few moments later we started continuing up again. We regrouped at the 31st floor. We took a longer blow there. When we were going up, people were handing us bottles of water too. The higher we would get up, there were some severely burnt people. People were helping people down.

At the 31st floor -- I was the last one to get there, again. The company took a blow. Lieutenant Atlas from 10 Engine popped his head in the door and said, "Come on, guys. We've got to make a push." Tom Holohan and Billy Johnston, they had a little bit of their wind, and Lieutenant O'Hagan. They said they were going start. Me and Paul probably needed a little more of a blow.

So they started in the stairs again. An officer came in from the A stairway, which was towards exposure 3. He came out of the A stairway and was asking me and Paul, "Where is the C stairway? Where is the C stairway?"

So Paul went towards the exposure 1 side of the building, and I went towards the

exposure 4 side of the building. The C stairway was towards exposure 1, towards the front of the building.

He said that they wanted -- I don't remember what company this officer was from. I think it might have been 5 Truck. I'm kind of fuzzy on that. They wanted civilians in the C stair. Rescue 1 was also taking a blow on this floor. The whole company was taking a blow with us.

At this point the whole corridor filled up with civilians that were in the B stairway, the attack stairway, and they were evacuating to the C stairway. Then it cleared up that stairway pretty good.

A short while later Paul realized his helmet was missing. Rescue had left. They started up again.

Q. What's Paul's last name?

A. Paul Beyer. Paul realized his helmet was missing. We were looking for his helmet. I said, "You know, maybe someone from rescue took it by mistake, you know," because guys were uncovering and they put their stuff back on.

Then I was thinking maybe one of the civilians took it. But I come to find out, talking to other guys, that there was an Engine 6 helmet on the 17th floor where we took the blow. He forgot his helmet down there and he didn't realize it and we didn't realize it.

So he grabbed a roll-up and started in the stairs again. Oh, on the 31st floor we decided -- we had four rollups with us. We said let's take two rollups between four guys. And we left two rollups on the 31st floor.

So Billy Johnston and Tommy Holohan grabbed one. Paulie probably grabbed the other one, and I was buttoning up, getting ready. I was really fatigued.

I remember on the 31st floor there were two guys from 10 Truck, and there was a Port Authority police officer with a Scott pack, a uniform and a Scott pack, and he had medical supplies. I think the guys were having chest pains, and he was tending to them.

Paulie probably was worried about me, and he was saying, "Are you all right?" I said, "I'm all right. I'm all right." He told the

guy, "Oh, check him out. Check him out." The guy asked me, "Are you all right?" I said, "I'm all right. I'm all right."

I entered the staircase. I started going up. I got to approximately the 37th floor. I had the backup position. I had a handy talky. The building violently shook like an earthquake, tossing us around. I donned my mask. I didn't know what.

Then someone opened the door from the 36th floor and said Two World Trade Center just fell down. I'm thinking it's one of these, it fell like on an angle, fell across many blocks. I didn't know it pancaked. The way the building shook, I didn't doubt him that it had fallen completely.

It might have been about 30 seconds later I had heard a handy talky transmission. I believe it was "Mayday! Mayday! Evacuate the building. Evacuate the building."

Q. On Channel 1?

A. On Channel 1. That's the channel I was on.

Then everybody was saying, "You got

that? You got that? Evacuate the building. Evacuate the building." On the handy talky everybody is going -- I turned around and started going down. You could only walk. You would get a couple of steps, and it would stop. Maybe you would get a couple more steps, and it would stop.

Q. Full of people?

A. All firemen. I don't remember civilians.

Q. So there were so many that they were bunching up? You would walk, stop, walk stop?

A. Yeah, walk, stop. It was like people gridlock again. Everybody was calling everybody on the radio: This unit to this position. This unit to this position. I was trying to get my chance in. I called and I believe I spoke to Tom Holohan control, "I'm working my way down. We're evacuating. We're working our way down."

You get a couple of steps or a couple of floors, and it would stop. Guys were filing in from every floor. I was on the outside of the stairway, so as you would come down each stairway, that's where the floors were feeding in.

At one point there was an opening on the inside of the stairway. I realized let me move over there, because this lane is slow. I think that's what saved my life is that it was on the inside of the stairway as you come to each floor, they filed in on the outside of the stairway. Guys that I had seen coming down filing in on floors didn't make it. In hindsight looking at it now, I think that's what saved my life.

I worked my way down. When I got to the lower floors in the single digits, I had contact with my company officer. He was making his way down. I don't know what floor he was on. Around the fourth floor I passed this civilian. He might have been 450 pounds. He was huge, a man. I don't know what his age was, but he was huge, 450 pounds. He was taking baby steps like this.

I walked right past him like all the other firemen. I felt like a heel when I'm walking past him, and I'm thinking to myself as I'm walking past, what does this guy think of me, you know? I mean, I know now I couldn't have --

it would have blocked up the stairway more. I think it was about the fourth floor.

The next landing, the third floor, I remember two firemen carrying a woman. I believe it was a Caucasian woman. I don't think it was 6 Truck because that woman looked large and she was dark-skinned. I believe this was a smaller woman, from what I remember. I believe she was a Caucasian. It looked like they had it, they were making their way down.

I continued to file down. I got out of the stairs, into the core of the lobby. I had to climb over that pile of rubble again. There was some Port Authority personnel in there. He was pointing us towards the fire command station.

The lobby was really screwed now. There was dust and debris everywhere. I saw the front doors. There was debris all over the front doors that we entered. We walked towards the fire command station, which was on the exposure 1/exposure 2 wall. There was no personnel at the fire command station. I said, "Oh, this is bad."

We went up to the window. I was with a group of about 20 firemen. I don't remember who

There was somebody outside. I don't know if he was a member. He was 75, maybe 100 feet away from the building. He was covered in dust. He pointed up and he held up. We knew that meant something was coming down. We waited. I kept looking back. More guys are filing down. There's a whole string of guys filing down from there. Some people jumped. Some people landed right there.

He said, "Come on." I stepped out of this window. I remember I started walking out the building. I was walking. I remember I looked to the right. There was a pile there.

[REDACTED] I remember I looked to the left and saw what was the Marriott Hotel, and there was a giant V cut. From the top floor to

like the third floor was missing. There was a lot of rubble out in the street.

I remember I was walking out away from the complex to West Street, and I could see across the street on the steps on World Financial Center what looked like some kind of command post was set up. I remember I saw 6 Engine there, 6 Engine where we had parked it. No personnel around it.

I don't know if someone yelled "Go north" or if I heard a voice "Go north," but guys were going each direction. I went north, with a bunch of other guys too. I walked under the foot bridge, started heading north. I got to Vesey Street. I kind of crossed Vesey Street onto the southbound -- I'm sorry, to Vesey and West. I continued up West, but I kind of diagonally crossed into the southbound lanes of West Street coming down.

I got maybe a third of a block, half of a block up there, and I'm looking back, walking slow, waiting for my guys to catch up, and someone said, "It's falling." I saw the guy that yelled it, and he was far away. He was far away.

Q. Back towards the buildings?

A. No, he was further away from the buildings, further north and further west. He pointed up. He said, "It's falling." I looked, and it looked like to me that it was starting to tip at a 45 degree angle right towards me, the antenna. But you don't see that in the video. But I've seen one shot over and over and over. They play it on the news. I guess it started to pancake, and then at one point it started to tip. It looked like it was coming right towards me.

To backtrack, in this state when the order came to evacuate, people started ditching their equipment, their tools, taking their turnout coats off. I was buttoned up. I had my turnout coat on; I had my mask.

I was trying to run. I was so fatigued. I felt like the Michelin man. I was trying to run up West Street. I made a left onto, I don't know what street it was. I think it might have been Murray. There was a baseball field there.

Q. You were north of Vesey. You're coming up to Murray. And there was a baseball field

somewhere there?

A. Yeah. It might have been this street. There was a baseball field here, and it's a pretty big baseball field. It's two baseball fields wide.

Q. It's probably Murray street, just north of Murray street and just west of West Street.

A. Right. That's exactly where it was. I entered what appeared to be the outfield. I was trying not to look back. I was just trying to run, but I felt like I wasn't getting anywhere. I could start seeing this cloud coming at me.

I was just able to take my helmet off and get my face piece on and just get my helmet back on without snapping it, and I felt a blast. It might have knocked me to my knee and then I got up. It was all orange. It was papers on fire. I could see it was papers on fire. I could feel a little heat on the back of my neck and my ears. It surrounded me and then all of a sudden it just turned black, black ash.

I'm expecting, all right, something solid is going to hit me. Something solid is going to hit me. I'm pelted with small

particles, but I'm thinking the antenna is going to skew me in the back.

The first couple of breaths I took from my mask were concrete, dust, crap, so I was choking in my mask. But I knew it was a better environment than outside. I could see that rolling black stuff.

I turned on my flashlight. It only shined about two inches. I knew I couldn't stay there. I walked across this baseball field blind like this, like a baby, with my hands stretched out in front of me. I walked a long time. I thought my air was going to run out. I couldn't run because I couldn't see where I was going. Even though it was a baseball field, what's going to be in there; right? But you don't think.

The direction I chose was I guess a diagonal direction, and I walked a long time and stumbling a little. The next thing I felt was the back of the batting cage of the baseball field. I felt the angle of the fence. I knew it was a batting cage.

So I started working my way to the right, and I found a lower fence and I said to

myself this must be the dugout fence. So I worked my way all the way down it, around it, back down the fence. There's still no visibility. Then I felt the angle of the back of it. I said, all right, I'm at the back of the batting cage.

I was wondering if there's going to be a way out of this park now, you know. Some smoke started to lift, and I could see there was a break in the fence. I took my face piece off. My eyes were all irritated. When I came out, it was on North End Avenue, I believe, of that baseball field. North End Avenue.

Q. Right over here?

A. I think it was right here or right here. I'm not sure if it's Park Place or Wagner.

Q. We're looking on the map at North End Avenue at Park Place or Warren Street.

A. There was a news cameraman there. He's taking video of me. I'm kind of waving him off. I was pissed off he was taking video of me.

Two police officers came up to me and walked me up to the corner of Warren Street and North End Avenue, and they knelt me down and they

poured a gallon of water over my face to wash my eyes out. My face was covered with dust. There was a police officer then that said there's a triage center in Stuyvesant High School. He escorted me down North End Avenue to Chambers Street where Stuyvesant High School is located.

I walked into the lobby of this high school, and there were hundreds of people there. I turned around and I walked back out. I felt I was all right. I wanted to recoup my company. I started walking down Chambers Street, and some EMS girl came chasing after me. She said, "Oh, come in. Come in." I said, "No, I'm all right. I'm all right." She said, "Are you sure? You don't look all right." I was covered in the dust. I said, "I'm all right."

I tried contacting my company on the handy talky. I went down to West Street. I started regrouping with other companies in my battalion: Ladder 1, 7 Engine. I saw the captain of 7 Engine, Captain Tardio. He said he had two members missing. I said, "I'm missing everybody."

I was trying to call my guys. There

were no answers. Everybody started giving maydays, maydays, maydays. You couldn't get control. We had a chief who was trying to get control. "We've got a mayday. Let's get control." There was no control of the radio.

All of a sudden a wall of people come running up. They were afraid another building was going to collapse. I thought I was going to be trampled to death. I tried to run too. I maybe ran like a block north more. Then I knelt down. I was totally shot.

A short while later an Army paramedic came up to me. He said, "Are you all right?" I said, "Yeah, I'm all right, just I feel cold." He said, "It's a warm day." I remembered it was a beautiful day. And I was freezing.

So he starts asking me questions. I was overweight. "Do you have shortness of breath?" Yeah, I had shortness of breath. He thought I was having a heart attack. I got scared. I thought I was having a heart attack too. He gave me a nitroglycerin pill. He flagged down two EMS guys.

They got an ambulance with the windows

blown out. It had no equipment in it, just a stretcher. They put me on the stretcher. They brought me to St. Vincent's Hospital. They deconned me outside. They brought me into the emergency room.

It seemed like a whole team was working on me. After evaluating me and looking for injuries, they said they don't think I had a cardiac episode but I inhaled a lot of crap. They admitted me to St. Vincent's Hospital. I was there for two days.

Late in the evening is when several members of my company found me in the hospital. Apparently I was among the missing. I didn't know.

First at the door I told the nurse call my firehouse. She had contact with someone, but it probably wasn't someone from my company. It was someone -- who knows -- to let them know I was in the hospital and all right.

The captain and several members came. It was Captain Sakowich. He said, "We gotta know where you were operating, because no one knows nothing." I basically described where we were in

the B staircase. It was pretty much in the center of the core. It was on the left side of the elevators, but it was pretty much in the core and we were working our way down, you know.

When we were on 31, we started going up. We tried to make the 44th floor. There was a report of an elevator on the 44th floor that went into the 60s. So I gave him all the information where we were.

CHIEF MALKIN: We'll have to break for one minute. It's 1429 hours. There's a phone call.

(Interruption.)

CHIEF MALKIN: The interview resumes at 1431 hours.

A. I think I got to the hospital like approximately 11:30 a.m., maybe 12 noon. They had me up in a room by 12:30. They contacted my firehouse at 1 p.m. The nurse contacted my wife. I went on the phone with my wife and I told her, "Just go home. It's a war down here." Of course she didn't. She came down to the hospital, and she stayed with me like the next 30 hours.

Like I said, Captain Sakowich in the

evening -- it might have been 10, 11; it might have been midnight -- came to the hospital with several members from my company. He said, "Where were you operating? We've got to know where you're operating. No one knows nothing."

So I told him where we were in that B staircase, explained the whole thing to him. I guess I was kind of emotional. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So they left. They didn't tell me they didn't find any of the guys yet, but I could see it in their eyes. I knew that they didn't find anybody else.

I turned on the TV then. I think it's about midnight. Only one channel came in, Channel 2, and it was very fuzzy. That's when I learned that the planes were struck by jetliners. I never thought it was jetliners, you know.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Another Lieutenant Atlas, Lieutenant Atlas's brother, came in and was asking me had I seen his name. He said, "You know my brother?" I said, "Yeah, 10 Engine." I said, "I believe he was above me. I don't think he made it." [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I was released from the hospital Thursday afternoon. I came to the firehouse. That's when I learned the four guys I entered the building with were missing, and they told me an extensive search was being done.

Two retired members brought me home that night. The next morning a retired member picked me up, we came in, and I went down to ground zero and tried to help with the line on the pile. It really wasn't good for me. I was coughing a lot. I had a paper mask for protection. You know the story.

Everybody was kind of upset because we were working where Three World Trade Center was. I said the guys are going to be where one was. But they assured me that, no, they were working there earlier and they needed some cranes to move

some stuff out of the way so they could get in there more.

I guess that's about it.

Q. That's about it. Let me ask you something.

A. Sure.

Q. When you went in the lobby and you talked about the elevator doors that all, some were blown? What did they look like?

A. There were elevator doors that were missing.

Q. Missing.

A. There were elevator doors that were ajar.

Q. Right.

A. I could see an elevator car twisted in the shaft.

Q. Was there fire in the elevator shaft? Was there smoke? Any evidence of fire dropping down to that level?

A. That rubble was burnt rubble. I've come to learn from guys behind me they said it was burnt bodies. Like I said, my first instinct was to look up. I thought the ceiling might have

come down. But the ceiling was intact. Then I was thinking well maybe the floor had blown up from the bottom. I guess my mind was processing, processing what this rubble could be. It couldn't be what it was.

[REDACTED]

Q. [REDACTED]

A. [REDACTED]

Q. [REDACTED]

What were your instructions in the lobby? The officer reported in to the command post?

A. The officer reported in to the command post, and then he came over to us and said, "We're going to take the B staircase, the attack staircase. B staircase is the attack staircase, and we're going to start walking."

Q. You were taking the hose up. Did you get the impression the idea was like you were going to fight the fire or what?

A. We were going to put the fire out.

Q. You were going to put the fire out.

Okay.

A. Even like in hindsight I'm thinking now the standpipe must have been compromised. That first ten stories, the water was falling down like rapids, ankle deep. You get tunnel vision, I guess. Just like I was studying -- I was studying.

Or the time of the explosion, when we saw the explosion and then when we got to the front -- maybe it was four minutes. Multiple floors were on fire now. Steel fails in 20 minutes. What were we thinking if we had to walk up there.

I know something I forgot. On the 31st floor I think there was a handy talky transmission -- I think a member of Rescue 1 -- he said, "Be advised it takes an hour and 15 minutes to get to the 31st floor." I said, "An hour and 15 minutes? That seems like a long time, you know." But I think that's what it was.

Something else I forgot. As we were heading up, after that second plane hit -- and that's the way I heard it, a handy talky transmission: "Another plane! Another plane!"

A small rumble, and another plane just hit the south tower.

We also started hearing reports from civilians: The Pentagon got hit, the White House got hit, the capital got hit, the Sears Tower got hit. We thought it was a war. It was a war.

Q. It was a war.

When that guy from rescue went on the handy talky and said, "Be advised, an hour and 15 minutes," in other words, we were an hour and 15 minutes into the operation?

A. I believe so.

Q. He was saying, "It's an hour and 15 minutes, and I'm just on the 31st floor"?

A. Right.

Q. This is to give some estimate of how we were progressing going up?

A. I think so.

Q. Exactly right, yeah.

When your officer reported in the lobby, did you see who he reported in to? Did you recognize any chiefs? Was Battalion 1 there?

A. I think Battalion 1 had just gotten in when we got there.

Q. Did Battalion 1 give him the orders to take your company and go up and do whatever? You don't know who he reported to?

A. No.

Q. Okay. That's good.

A. There were a lot of officers there. I remember when we first got there Squad 18 was there. They weren't even in their rig. They were in the building. I don't think they were in the lobby. I think they had already started going up, I guess.

The other units kind of converged at the same time. They were coming from different directions, gather their equipment and run in.

I remember there was a decorative wall in front of One World Tower. It was like a driveway that came up. It was like an oval. I remember there was like a concrete wall there, and there was a lady sitting on there. She was shaking. She was burned a little. She was just shaking. She was in shock. But we had a task. We had a task at hand. We were going to put the fire out, and we went in.

I remember seeing people jump when we

were going in. It looked like they were landing on top of Six World Trade. Any minute we thought they could land on us, so we had to run in. We had to run in.

[REDACTED]

Q. Pretty much it?

A. I guess so, yeah.

CHIEF MALKIN: I want to thank Firefighter Green for this interview. It's 1441 hours. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110393

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS LYNN

Interview Date: December 26, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today is December 26th, 2001. The time is now 1549 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department, City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Fireman First Grade Thomas Lynn of Engine Company 5. We are in Engine Company 5's company office. There is nobody else present at this time. The interview is in regard to the events of September 11th, 2001. What follows now is the interview.

A. I came in on the morning of the 11th, and the company ended up going on a run and had enough members where they didn't need me to go on the rig. They went to a box which turned out to be a false alarm. From that box they responded directly on the second alarm to the World Trade Center.

Hearing what was happening from the house watch, another member came in, Richard Carletti, and we took his car down and proceeded down towards the towers. We ended up parking his car by 6 Engine. We walked from there with our gear but no air tanks. We just had our gear with

us. We ended up walking down Liberty Street, past the World Trade Center, which is Two World Trade Center.

We basically saw a lot of body parts and plane wreckage that was just all over the street. We just basically walked by that. We were walking down towards West Street, I guess it is, to the staging area, which was I guess across the street from the Vista Hotel, more in line with the building that holds the Winter Garden theater.

Q. Right.

A. From there we went from rig to rig to see if we could locate 5 Engine's rig and see if we could get air tanks. Once we did, we went back to the staging area. I told the chief that we were from 5 Engine -- I'm not sure which chief it was -- and that our members were in the north tower and we were ready to go in. Actually I said we were thinking of going in. He said, "No, no. You wait here. I'm putting a team together." He put us with a captain from 91 Engine, and we were standing fast there.

Then the south tower came down, and

everybody just ran. We ran into the building where the Winter Garden theater was, and the debris was coming down. We just kept on running in there. The front of it collapsed.

Later we found out of where we went in, and we came out on Vesey Street. Yeah, we came out on Vesey and the West Side Highway and proceeded north on --

Q. West Street.

A. -- West Street until it cleared up a little bit. There were fires in the parking lot where Vesey Street and Murray Street was, and I ended up helping, with Carletti, helping stretching lines to put out those fires. There was really no hydrant pressure at that point.

Q. Where did you get the lines from?

A. I'm not sure which rigs. Whatever rigs were parked right around that area. Those rigs were still okay from the collapse of the south tower.

I just wanted to make note that Lieutenant Paul Mitchell, who was getting off that morning, from our firehouse, I met him at the staging area before the collapse of the south

tower and talked to him briefly. I thought he was still on duty, but he had actually gotten off duty that morning and came back and responded there.

He, I believe, was sent in moments or minutes before the south tower collapsed. I believe he was sent into the south tower before. It seemed like almost right after he was sent in it collapsed.

Q. You saw him before that?

A. Yeah. I saw him at the staging area.

Q. Where was the staging area?

A. The staging area was on West Street at the West Side Highway in front of the financial building which houses the Winter Garden. There was a garage area that went down into the financial building, and that was basically where the board was set up.

I know I saw Von Essen there at one point, and I think Ganci and all those other chiefs were there also.

Q. This is the Winter Garden here.

A. Yeah.

Q. So it was somewhere in this area, on

West Street somewhere in front of the Winter Garden?

A. Yeah.

Q. The staging area was in that area, you said?

A. Yes.

Q. You said that you saw your company officer --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- and he went to the south tower?

A. Right. I believe he went into the south tower.

Q. Okay.

A. So after that south tower collapsed, all the maydays came in, and you could hear everybody was asked to get out of the north tower, evacuate the north tower. We were looking for our members from 5 Engine and did meet up with some of them.

So we regrouped. We moved 5 Engine's rig, which was originally parked on West Street and between Vesey and Barclay, and we ended up moving the rig up to Murray Street off of West Street.

Then from there the members -- once we regrouped, though there was a missing member at that time, though there were a lot of maydays for missing members, so the lieutenant decided let's take the rig and we'll go around the whole area and back and get as close as we can to the towers. This is after the second tower collapsed, now. I guess I'm jumping the gun. A little after we moved the rig, the second tower came down.

Q. Where were you when the second tower came down?

A. When the second tower came down, I probably was about around Barclay.

Q. Still on West Street?

A. Yeah, still on West Street.

Q. The company was still there?

A. Yeah, still there.

Q. I'm confused. There was an officer with you at this point to order the movement of the rig?

A. Yeah, once we all got together.

Q. Was he on duty or the other guy was on duty?

A. No, he was on duty.

Q. He was on duty. Who was the other officer?

A. He relieved Lieutenant Mitchell in the morning. So Lieutenant Paul Mitchell, he had been relieved. From what I understand, he went all the way to Brooklyn, heard what had happened and then drove his car all the way back and ended up --

Q. That's the lieutenant that went to the south tower? I'm confused.

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. He's the one that went to the south tower.

A. Yeah.

Q. Now you had the on-duty officer with you at the rig?

A. Yeah. They were in the north tower.

Q. Right.

A. They were in the north tower. They got out of there before the collapse, barely, except for one of ours, Manny Delvalle.

Then we proceeded around to Trinity Street with the rig after that and ended up

taking a hydrant. Then we walked down I guess it was like Albany Street and then down to the west side to try to get closer.

Then we ended up not being able to do anything down there. So we walked back up to Trinity, moved the rig to I guess it was around Cortlandt Street and Trinity, took a hydrant. Then I think we walked down I think it was Vesey Street, but I'm not sure. We ended up helping hook up to tower Ladder 119 from the rig of 41 Engine. We were supplying the tower ladder, putting out fire in the --

Q. What were the conditions now as you were walking around here? What were the conditions in the World Trade Center? Was there a lot of fire?

A. There was a lot of fire in I guess it would be World Trade Center northeast plaza. I'm not sure. Unless it was the federal office building and the U.S. post office. I'm not sure. Or it could have even been Seven World Trade Center, now that I'm looking at the map.

Q. That's this building right here.

A. Yeah, I think that was the one that was

on fire that we were supplying 119 with.

Q. 119 was working into that building to put out fire in that building?

A. Yeah. I think -- yeah, that must have been the building that was on fire at the time.

So we primarily worked on that, and my time is way off on what happened or how long we operated. It seemed like forever.

Q. Where was your rig at this time? It was still back on Trinity?

A. I believe our rig was on Trinity or it could have even been Broadway between Cortlandt and Dey, I believe.

Q. What were you guys doing with 119 now? You supplied them? You got a line from someplace?

A. Yeah. Actually we hooked up a line into a basement of one of the office buildings there, the riser. I'm not sure which officer turned on the pump station in the building, which created like 90 pounds of pressure, which was plenty of pressure and a lot more pressure than any of the hydrants had at that time. I don't know who thought of that, but that was great. So

41 Engine had plenty of water.

Yeah, that's what we did.

Q. You operated there for some time at that location?

A. Yeah, for some time.

Q. Did you operate a line there? When you say that there was plenty of pressure --

A. No.

Q. -- were you guys operating a line?

A. No, no, we weren't operating a line.

Q. What do you remember after that?

A. I remember meeting up with other -- we went back to the rig and took a blow and met up with other members that had come down from the company. I just remember being very exhausted at that point.

Q. The guys on duty from 5 Engine that you met, they couldn't account for the guys that were missing; right? They didn't know where they were? Was there an organized effort to go back and find them?

A. I don't really know.

Q. You're not aware?

A. I don't really know. I don't know if

they were really aware of that, because of all the different transmissions and everything, whether or not -- maybe it seemed unbelievable. It seemed unbelievable to me -- I guess I can only speak for myself -- that one of the members was missing. I didn't know that he had gotten separated from the rest of the company.

Q. They were in the north tower at some point, and they got separated?

A. Yeah. But I wasn't in the north tower, so I don't know exactly what happened. So maybe I shouldn't speculate.

That's it. That's basically it.

Q. After you finished operating with 119, what did you say, you went back by the rig?

A. Yeah, we went back by the rig and took a blow. Then we ended up getting transported back to the firehouse. That might have been like 8:00 at night or something. Then we made a determination of what groups were going to continue on. I myself was relieved at like 10:30 that night, and then I worked the next day.

That's it.

Q. Okay. Pretty good.

CHIEF MALKIN: The interview is concluded. The time is now 1604. This concludes the interview with Firefighter First Grade Thomas Lynn of Engine 5, and I thank the fireman for this interview.

File No. 9110396

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ROBERT NORRIS

Interview Date: December 27, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF MC GRATH: The date is Thursday, December 27, 2001. The time is 1407 hours, and this is Battalion Chief James McGrath of the Fire Department of the City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with Fireman Robert Norris, Engine 202, and I'm holding this interview regarding events that occurred on September 11, 2002.

Q. Bob, if you would just state your name and company and then in your own words just start telling me what happened from when you responded up until whenever.

A. My name is Robert Norris. I work on the Engine 202 in Red Hook, Brooklyn.

I came to work on that morning on September 11, at 5:30 in the morning to do some studying for an upcoming lieutenant's exam. I was on the incoming for Ladder 101 that day.

About 7:30 in the morning, I had gone downstairs to tell the members of the kitchen that I was due to work in the truck, that anyone who was there who was going home, that I was there to relieve them and they could take up. So after three or four times telling everyone that I'm here, no one would answer

R. NORRIS

me. I said, "I'll be back upstairs studying. Whenever someone wants to go home, send him upstairs, and I'll relieve them."

Well, I kept studying till about 8:30, and I came back downstairs, and I repeated again, "Who's going home? Who's going home?" No one would answer me, and with a cup of coffee, I went out on the apron, and then we looked, and I saw that there was a cloud of smoke coming from over one of the buildings in Red Hook that I noticed it was coming from Manhattan.

Myself and a few other members ran up to the roof, and from there we were able to see that the tower had been hit or that the tower -- there was a fire in it at this time.

One thing I remembered, there were so many pieces of paper flying around that initially we felt that there were seagulls just hovering around the building. It was a pretty remarkable sight.

But at this time it was about quarter to, maybe twenty to. I'm not really sure what time the first plane hit. So we came downstairs, and being a mile and a half from the sight, we felt it was just a matter of time before we were going to be sent over.

So we kept saying, when are they going to

R. NORRIS

call us, when are they going to call us, and time went on, and went on, and on, and on, and on, and we kept saying, who's going on the truck, and the truck, they were filled up. No one would leave.

So it turns out they did send a ticket over to the companies here in Red Hook to go over to what's called the staging area outside the entrance to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel in a convoy fashion that when they would need us, they would send us over.

202 was the first engine on the line. We were lined up on Hamilton Avenue on the -- I guess the Manhattan-bound side of Hamilton Avenue, at the entrance to the tunnel, and Red Hook -- I'm sorry -- Ladder 101 was the second company on that line.

Well, because we were there for a few minutes, we all got out of the rig, and we were standing there. We watched another plane come in. I felt the plane was coming underneath the pillar of smoke that was coming out of the first tower, but obviously it veered into the tower, and it took another hit.

We actually felt like a rumbling sensation over in Brooklyn. At that point, we heard it over the radio, whatever they called our staging area, you know,

R. NORRIS

202, 101, 131, 279, and whatever other companies were behind us. They were saying, go, go, go, go, go through the tunnel, so we all jumped back on the rig.

The TBTA had stopped traffic. One thing that I should mention, one of the members that we had working with us that day was a detail from Ladder 118, Anthony Gonzalez. He came over on a detail, and one thing I want to mention was the fact that since there was no room in the truck, I was able to jump on the engine and take the box in on the engine, and over in the staging area, Lieutenant Hawkins was giving out positions, and I knew that now from this point on that I would be working in the engine, because I'm primarily an engine guy, but as we went through the tunnel, most of the traffic had been stopped after the first impact, and there was considerable traffic in there, but as we were going through the tunnel, it was eerie to see all the people on express buses going into the city, and they were at the same level as the engines and trucks, and it was weird to see the eye contact being made from the people in the buses. It was eerie. They were making signs of the crosses, and lip synching, God bless you, be careful and such.

But the reason why I mentioned Anthony

R. NORRIS

Gonzalez was because after the first impact, he called his wife, and she was in the southern tower. He said to her, "We haven't gone over there yet, but we should be going over there shortly. What I want you to do is I want you to get out of that building now and just don't worry about it and just be safe."

So as we stood at the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel entrance, we saw the second plane hit, and Anthony had his cell phone with him, and he called his wife, and of course there was no answer. Sitting in the back-up position, I was sitting across from the control man, which was this Anthony Gonzalez. I only knew him in passing, but at this point, he felt that his wife was either in danger or considerably injured, so he was pretty much in shock at this point. It looked as if he wasn't ready to do anything.

Timmy Burke and I were saying how this is going to be a legendary day in the Fire Department because of the impact that the collisions would have on the department, as well as the city.

After considerable traffic in the tunnel, we came out, and all the traffic had been stopped northbound on West Street. We looked as if we were the first engine company to come from the Brooklyn Battery

R. NORRIS

Tunnel as a regular engine company, not the squad or any other companies, and there was a number of airplane parts throughout the street littering the streets, as well a considerable amount of body parts that were all over the street that were, I guess, either from the airplane passengers or somebody that might have been up on the tower working.

202 had stopped in front of the northern tower. I'm looking at a picture here, and to clarify the names, we stopped probably right about in front of either 1 World Trade or the -- the Vista was a bit southern. I think we were -- we were in between the two pedestrians bridges, more towards the northern pedestrian bridge.

I was under the impression that we were across the street at 7 Financial Center, which I don't see on here. It's right near the Winter Garden, the building in front of the Winter Garden on West Street, but we had stopped in front of what I thought was the northern tower, 1 World Trade, and I felt that we stopped pretty dangerously close to the northern tower.

I jumped out, and I'll never forget, a huge chunk of steel had fallen maybe 15, 20 feet from me,

R. NORRIS

and Lieutenant Hawkins screamed out, "Get on the rig. Get on the rig. We're going to move. We're going to move." And I remember jumping on the rig saying, I feel safe now, but had that piece of steel hit the rig, it would have split the rig in half, because it was such a considerable size piece, but Engine 202 had then driven across the median to the southern-bound traffic lane of West Street.

We jumped off the rig, and we went over to at that point the command center, which was a couple -- maybe a couple of hundred feet south of the pedestrian bridge, the northern pedestrian bridge. Maybe a hundred -- maybe 50 yards, we'll say.

We stood in the street. At that point, all the other companies started rolling in, and they had, I guess, moved the command center from wherever it was previously to where we stood, and it was pretty chaotic. There was nothing. No organization whatsoever. No one knew what was going on, who was going where, what building we were going to be sent into, what building they were speaking of. It was really chaotic.

One officer made the suggestion to have the companies move underneath the protection of 7 Financial

R. NORRIS

Center in what was an inbound garage, underground garage, entrance. There were two driveways. One was an inbound, and one was an outbound. There was a wall in between the two, so you couldn't see the other side.

This officer had said, "All the engine men to the right-hand side and all the truck men to the left-hand side, and all officers report to the staging area," which appeared at this point to be on the downgrade slope or it would be the upgrade slope of the outbound garage lane.

We stood there for what felt like an eternity. There were a number of people that were jumping from the building, landing on what looked like an awning. It might have been the northern tower's marquee, I'm not really sure, but people kept jumping at an alarming rate, hitting the ground.

Because we were there for so long and because there was such chaos, a chief had mentioned, "Fellows, just, you know, relax a little bit, take off our jackets, take off your Scott pack." He goes, "You're going to be awhile here today. I suggest you save all your energies." Being a hot day that it was, a number of people removed their jackets and Scott pack, their

R. NORRIS

helmets, and were standing around in this group of -- the engine men group.

There were a number of people who looked physically shaken up. A priest had come down and was checking over the crowd to see who looked as if they needed some assistance emotionally, and he pulled a few people to the side to speak to them.

At this point, the detail from Ladder 118, Anthony Gonzalez, kept trying to contact his wife, and he kept unsuccessfully calling. He was being consoled by our chauffeur, Mike Mahoney, who has known Anthony Gonzalez for a much longer time than I have. He was trying to console him by any way that he can. Anthony had removed his gear, as well, but he sat down in the back from where the group was witnessing the people jumping, and from where Anthony was sitting, I doubt he could see very much past the slope of the entranceway, because at that -- that's the height of the sidewalk, the point being Mike was consoling him, and myself and Timmy Burke were standing in the front area without our helmets on and our jackets on, witnessing what was going on across the street.

Anthony was by no means capable of gathering up his gear and going in. He just sat there in awe.

R. NORRIS

He was shaking his head and putting his hand on his head, just -- he was devastated.

At this point, there was a chief randomly walking back and forth, not necessarily, from my opinion, picking companies based upon officers signing in at the command center. It just looked as if somebody was saying, you guys in, you guys in, based upon -- in retrospect, those he looked as if were dressed and ready to go as a unit.

Companies arrived after 202 did, and they were sent in by no other reason, I think, that they were all collectively together. I was standing next to a guy who had just called his wife -- girlfriend, "I'm okay, I just want to let you know everything is fine," and I asked him -- I said, "Do you mind if I borrow your phone and call my wife?" And he gave me his phone, and as soon as I dialed my wife, the phone was ringing, and I heard what was a third plane coming in. I heard the propulsion of an engine and then an explosion.

We looked up and saw these huge chunks. There's one particular piece of this building that fell in its entirety that I'll never forget. It was as if it was a Schwarzenager movie taking place. It just

R. NORRIS

came down showering on us.

At that point, with the phone in my hand, everyone started screaming, "Run," so we all ran into the garage, and I was expecting a fire ball to come chasing us down the driveway because of how the air pushed its way down the tunnel in such a fashion with such force.

I'll never forget. I closed my eyes and just waited to feel the heat coming, and it was an incredible force, but it wasn't the force that I was expecting which was flames. It was just the all the dust and debris, which was, you know, pea soup. You couldn't see a thing.

But it was, I'd say, 30, 40 some odd guys running down one entrance, one way of the garage, not knowing what took place on the truck side, the ladder side of the exit of the garage, but we all ran blindingly down into an area that no one ever had been in before. We couldn't find an exit. It was pretty chaotic down there for a period.

We tried to force a door. That turned out to be a storage shed. There was no other doors around for us to force. No one had any tools. There was no tools around, because at the time of the collapse, a lot of

R. NORRIS

people had put down their gear, because they were standing there so long. All I had on was my bunker pants. I didn't have a radio. I had a radio. Didn't have my jacket. Didn't have my helmet.

And that was the majority of the people that I was around. A lot of them didn't have their gear with them. They were just -- you know, no one was prepared to start forcing doors, but people were screaming at one another down there, just trying to get back with the people they arrived with, and I remember Timmy Burke and I had said we were going to stay together all day, and I heard his voice, he heard mine, and it was as if walking in a pitch-black darkness. We were walking with our hand in front of our faces, trying to not walk into people or the wall, because it was just zero visibility.

Jimmy and I had paired up together, and we inch by inch started walking out towards the entranceway, and initially I felt that the debris had sealed off our exit from that entranceway, because there was zero visibility. We couldn't find anything with all the debris that was in the street, so I thought. In retrospect, it was all the dust that was lingering, but I thought it was actual pieces of the

R. NORRIS

building blocking our exit.

We started feeling along the floor for like different types of tools and different types of equipment, and I remember finding a helmet from 226, and there were Scott packs around, and miscellaneous jackets and pants. We then heard Lieutenant Hawkins trying to reach us on the radio, and we walked back into the tunnel area. Someone had tied up a search rope in an area in the beginning of the -- not in the beginning, but in the area where the visibility started getting better, the deep part of the garage, and people started following this search rope.

Didn't it lead out to -- I guess from this picture this call it the Winter Garden, I know it as the place where Moran's, is the restaurant/bar over there called Moran's, as well as a cruise ship called THE EXCALIBER that my brother had his wedding on.

When we got back together again, Lieutenant Hawkins had found Mike Mahoney and Anthony Gonzalez, who was still shell-shocked, but even more so now that the collapse had taken place. We were speechless. There was a period of silence that was around us because there weren't many people that came out of this particular exit from the garage.

R. NORRIS

We had come out to the Moran's -- we'll call it a quadrangle or a courtyard area -- and it was eerily silent with papers flying around us and the dust. With that, we stood there in awe for awhile, not knowing what to do.

Lieutenant Hawkins just kept us cool and said, "All right, guys, you know, just everyone relax." I recommended maybe going back out there and seeing what we could do, because we knew of a way to get back at least to where we stood. You know, maybe we could climb out from under the debris or whatever. Lieutenant Hawkins, I remember him saying that if that building had fallen, it won't be long before the other one is going to fall, as well. He told us just relax. "We are going to find something to do. We'll be able to do some stuff later."

We stood there for awhile and because the southern tower fell first, this northern tower was more in line of view with where we stood. We were almost, you know, parallel to the building, so Lieutenant Hawkins recommended walking north along the waterfront to get out of the way, harm's way of the possibility of the second tower falling, the northern tower.

As we walked, we were watching a number of

R. NORRIS

the New York Waterway ships, ferries, come over from New Jersey, and they were starting to have makeshift ferry entrances for people, civilians, who were coming over to this particular part of the area screaming, crying, some injured, some not.

There were a lot of people that were injured. We independently started helping people who looked as if they needed help, because as a unit we were without tools. We were without our own protection. I lost my jacket, my helmet. Anthony Gonzalez didn't have his Scott pack. He might have had his jacket. Mahoney might have had his jacket. Lieutenant Hawkins, I think had his jacket and helmet, but no light or no tool. We were helpless as, quote unquote, firemen without tools.

We just kept assisting civilians and just ferrying them onto the ferries to get out of the area to go towards New Jersey. I don't remember at this part whether we kept assisting civilians, and then Tim and I went to get something to drink, because the number one complaint was people were unable to even talk because of their mouths, as ours, contained all the shit. It was like pouring an ashtray in your mouth. It was terrible.

R. NORRIS

We went up to Stuyvesant High School, which actually wasn't Stuyvesant High School as we know it. There was an annex a few blocks down. I'm looking here, and it might have been on Vesey Street. Vesey Street there was -- well, looking here, either Vesey Street was this quadrangle or -- but there's a park that's over there, a grass park, and I believe it might be over Vesey Street. Okay. But the actual overpass and the Stuyvesant High School is at a different location. Actually, it's further up.

We went into what was an annex of the school. In there, Tim Burke and I tried to call our families and let them know that we were okay, but what I'm getting at is I wasn't sure if this took place after the second collapse or before the second collapse.

Tim and I had come back with cases and cases of juices that we were giving to civilians and firemen alike. As we went back with the drink -- and this is what, again, I don't remember what took place first. We walked back towards what says 4 World Financial Center, Merrill Lynch building. I remember being over there, and did I hear yet another -- what I thought was a propulsion of a plane, and then an explosion, and

R. NORRIS

then we all dove to the floor.

There was a section of that park that was elevated with respect to the benches. I remember diving underneath a bench that was below an elevated part of the park, a grass section, and there was this cloud, because I wasn't sure how far the debris was going to be falling of the building itself.

I imagine people who weren't able to dive underneath this protective area just closed their eyes, because there was no telling how far this debris would fall, because looking at this picture, you'd say, okay, you know, you're way out of harm's way, but as we all know, the size of the buildings was immense.

At this point, we happened to see a lot of other firemen start trickling in. I remember seeing one firemen. He didn't have a helmet on. A young kid, he was walking with his jacket off on one shoulder, and he looked like he was shell-shocked, and I said, "Bro, are you okay?" And I remember I had some juices with us. I said, "Bro, are you okay? Are you okay?" And he didn't answer me, so I kind of like stopped him and shook him. I said, "You okay?" Because he was just so deer in the headlights that I knew something was up with him, and he told me that he jumped out of the 2nd

R. NORRIS

Floor window, whatever that meant, whether that was before a collapse, after a collapse, during a collapse. I don't know which company he was from, but he looked emotionally pretty bad.

There were countless people on this waterfront promenade area that were requiring medical assistance, people saying they were having heart attacks, chest pains, those with visible lacerations, trauma, all being ferried over to New Jersey hospitals.

We felt helpless, because we had nothing. You know, they were asking us to get them what they were calling our oxygen masks to put on the people so they could be administered some oxygen, but I was kidding around telling my friends, you know, man, this is 4,500 pounds of compressed air, but they didn't understand what it was. They couldn't help it, that the best thing they could do was to hop on a ferry over to New Jersey regardless of how they were feeling. The best thing they could have done was to move over to that area where there were definitely some medical people.

I continued -- we had continued to help civilians and firemen alike, just trying to give them

R. NORRIS

some type of direction, just reassurance of their well-being that it was okay. You're going to be all right. Just keep walking up ahead.

Of the groups of people that were coming in this area, we seemed to be the better of the group, because these people might have been closer to the secondary collapse than we were, than we were of the first. At least we had some bit of shelter.

I remember hearing -- getting back to prior to the first collapse, we listened to the radio, and I remember hearing -- I believe it was 33 engine said that 33 to chief or whoever was in command, "We have reached the 30th Floor. It's taken us an hour. We project that we're going to be another hour by the time we reach our destination." And I was thinking, once you get to that destination, what type of conditions will the standpipe system be, as an engine. I mean, as far as extinguishing fire, there will be very little head pressure up that far up with the standpipe severed. I don't know if there are multiple standpipes or safety systems that are intact to bypass severed standpipes, but I would say what could a fireman do with 40 floors of fire.

Q. This was prior to the first building

R. NORRIS

collapse?

A. Yes, yes. As I stood there watching the people jumping, I heard a report of 33 -- I think it's 33, saying, "We're on the 30th Floor. We've been an hour, and it will take us another hour by the time we reach our assignments," whatever that might have been.

Q. Did you know if they were in the north or south tower?

A. That's just it. I was hearing reports from different people who weren't stating where they were from. I imagined if whoever was taking their positions knew where they were. 33 to command post, you know, I'm in this tower.

I wasn't aware of a separate frequency at this time. I didn't know if a separate frequency had been established before we arrived. I don't know of any additional circumvention to the radio chaos. There were a number of people stating that we have a man down on such and such a floor, chest pains, speaking of fire members. There were multiple reports of that.

Q. Do you recall any companies?

A. That I do not. I do recall saying that it was a shame to hear that people were giving very urgent messages that were being cut off by other urgent

R. NORRIS

messages. Maybe it's where I stood. Maybe some transmissions were coming through clear and some were not, and I was getting the dribs and drabs, but it just seemed as if there were no clear, thorough messages being sent, because everyone was stepping on each other's toes.

After the first collapse, it was just chaos.

I heard of -- I heard of one officer -- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] it seemed as if they were talking to a dispatcher, because they said -- again this is a memory. This isn't -- I don't remember where I heard this, but they were saying how such and such to command post, we'll say, you have an officer down on -- I think they said Broadway. You have a fire officer down in the streets of Broadway, and then I remember a transmission coming back and saying, "Disregard, DOA."

So I don't know who it was or who they were speaking of, but it just seemed as if that was the beginning of a lot of bad transmissions to follow. Coming in with 202 and 101 as a group, and knowing that I was to have worked with the truck, we were concerned as to what their assignments were. We did not know they were sent in. Being separated via the wall, I wasn't sure they were sent in or they were next to me.

R. NORRIS

We didn't know their whereabouts.

I felt kind of, you know, petty getting on the radio and saying, 202 to 101, are you okay, because of all the other transmissions taking place that I felt nothing I could do at this point to help 101, because we were equipment-less, as well as if they were hurt, they would have need of the airways, as well, to make their transmissions.

After the second collapse, sometime later we saw people starting to come in that had been under recall, and we said, "Have you seen 101?" And they said, "Yes, we saw 101." They were down in the -- south of the south tower. This was maybe eleven o'clock, 11:30. I don't know. It was still relatively early. So A, I felt the need to try to contact them, as we all did -- I'm saying personally -- to see how they were, make sure everyone was okay, but B, again, I didn't want to start making radio transmissions just to meet up with people, because I was already intact as a unit, and if they were intact as a unit, why would they want to hook up with us?

As it turned out, the spotting of 101 were people that came in on the recall, wearing 101 helmets as a group. Someone had seen a collective group of

R. NORRIS

guys wearing 101 helmets, thinking these were the guys that came in to work that day, so that's where the confusion took place.

We were hanging out, helping civilians and helping firemen with injuries. A lot of people with leg injuries, lacerations, again, just putting people on ferries. People were dying to get out of New York, hopping on the ferries.

I wanted to get back to help people down at the site to get back there and to help people search pretty much. I requested a few times to -- you know, can we get back down there, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

We stayed pretty much near the ferry areas, looked at the picture. It was probably at the end of Vesey Street, that little corner, that little -- I guess River Terrace and Vesey Street.

The ferries kept coming over there. We kept ferrying people over to New Jersey. After awhile, once that started calming down, we heard reports of members

R. NORRIS

to go north to Stuyvesant High School, or we went up by Stuyvesant High School, and we were there for awhile just in awe, just walking around, feeling useless, nothing -- didn't feel like it was real. Didn't feel like it took place.

After awhile, we heard a report that there was a gas leak or possible gas explosion in Stuyvesant High School because of ruptured gas lines. There was a chaotic evacuation of Stuyvesant High School, which just made things worse, because even though there might have been a leak, it just seemed as if it might have been connected somehow with what we found out was terrorist attacks.

Not being able to see -- our eyes were killing us. Our mouths were dry as anything. We stood up by Stuyvesant High School in awe. I remember being just devastated, just speechless, with respect to the potential of victims and potential of department members.

I believe when I was down on Vesey Street my old company, 65 engine, were giving Mayday transmissions. This I remember very clearly. I heard a Lieutenant Piambino, 65 engine, saying, "We're trapped. We're trapped. We can't get out. We're

R. NORRIS

trapped. We're trapped. Mayday, Mayday, Mayday." And that was one of many transmissions taking place at that time, but maybe due to my proximity, I was able to hear their transmission come out clearer.

Q. Was this prior to the second collapse?

A. This is what I don't remember. It could have been. It could have been, but maybe it wasn't. I don't remember. I don't remember, but as we went up to the building of Stuyvesant High School, did I see the whole company, five men engine company? They all walked out. They all walked up to the area of Stuyvesant High School.

It was like a little island in between the north and southbound lanes of South Street that people had started sitting on the walls after they closed the street's traffic. They just seemed they had been to hell and back.

Q. What companies?

A. This was 65 engine.

Q. 65?

A. Yeah, they all made it out.

The story which I would think was probably just the officer -- not that I was required, but I told him he did a great job, and he wasn't willing to relive

R. NORRIS

it. He said that at the Christmas party. I understood, but I just said, "You brought your men home. You did a great job."

There was a picture of a member being taken out of the pile screaming in pain with a missing tooth that was in the New York Post either that Thursday or Friday. I remember it really ripped the heart out of me. It was a chauffeur from 65 engine, Armand Reno, who has 30 some years on the job, but he made it out, though. It was a real heart-ripping picture. He dove under the rig, and the rig had been crushed, and he was underneath it, and somehow he made it out.

As far as my time line, we pretty much stayed up -- stayed up by Stuyvesant High School with dozens of other firemen. There were dozens of other firemen around us sitting on West Street, but I felt for all the members that were there at the time of the collapse that really weren't up to going back in and doing whatever needed to be done, for whatever reasons the individuals were -- we needed a rest. We needed equipment.

The dozens and hundreds of people coming from the northern part of West Street and walking down, fresh members, members coming in on recall, I felt

R. NORRIS

helpless sitting there, but, again, we didn't have anything to do what needed to be done, you know, without equipment and without hoses, tools.

We stood there for awhile. That was pretty much it. Consoling Anthony Gonzalez.

One thing I did mention, I did mention that happened. As we stood watching the people fall from the building, we looked at 202 was moving. The rig 202 was moving, and we turned around, and there was Mike Mahoney sitting there. For whatever reason, someone felt that the rig needed to be moved.

Someone had taken upon themselves to get in 202 and move the rig. I don't know how far they moved it, why they needed to move it or anything, but it was moved a couple of feet.

One thing I neglected to mention, Tim Burke and I had run out to get additional cylinders, because when we got off the rig initially, we kind of ran across the street to get out of any possible debris hitting us.

We went back up to the rig to get additional cylinders, and who do we see there at 202 rig but the Rescue 1 old timer. There is a -- I forgot his last name. He was just honored by the Holy Name Society.

A. Angelini. And didn't he look at Tim and I and said, "Kid, give me your chauffeurs' masks," he tells us, and he was by himself, and we said, "Our chauffeur has it? You know, we don't have it." He kept going through our compartments, and I remember him walking into the northern tower as cool as a cucumber, not looking up, not anything.

Q. Everything you said is certainly helpful. If there is anything else pertinent that you can think of --

[illegible]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BATTALION CHIEF MC GRATH: I thank you very much for the interview.

This will conclude the interview. The time is 1450 hours. This interview was conducted in the quarters of Engine 202.

File No. 9110397

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PAUL VASQUEZ

Interview Date: December 27, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTIS: Today's date is December 27, 2001. The time is approximately 1110 hours. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotis, safety command, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER VASQUEZ: Firefighter Paul Vasquez, Engine Company 284.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTIS: This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Paul, if you would, just tell me verbally how the events unfolded for you that day.

A. I was at home, saw it on TV, the first. My wife woke me up. I saw the first building burning. I watched on the news. I called up the firehouse, asked what was going on, if they had a recall going on or anything. They said nothing yet, stay home, stay by the phone. So after the second one, I called again. They told me it was a recall. I came in.

I came in, got changed. The truck and the engine were gone already, 284 and Ladder 149 were gone already, and I just got changed, took one of the guys' own private vehicle and headed up the Gowanus to the Brooklyn Bridge. They were holding people there. Emergency vehicles were allowed to go over, and they

P. VASQUEZ

were holding up guys in emergency vehicles waiting.

They sent us over, and then the rigs came over. We parked by the federal building over there, and it was already dust clouds, so I guess the first building already collapsed, and we started walking in, and not that long after that we heard, like, the rumble of the second building collapsing.

The first -- couple of us -- they were putting us in groups, trying to keep together. The first thing we started doing was -- I think it was Church and Vesey there was a bunch of cars on fire.

Q. Here is a map. You may be able to orient yourself.

A. I think it was Church, Trinity and Vesey. They were a bunch of car fires here on Vesey Street, and there was a couple of guys dressed in civilian clothes operating a hose line, so we took that from them and started trying to start putting out these car fires.

We were kind of hindered because of the lack of water, was like really bad water pressure, but we did the best we could, and we stayed there for I don't know how long exactly. We stayed there for awhile, started putting out -- trying to put out these car

P. VASQUEZ

fires.

Later on World Trade Center, I guess, Building 5, that was burning. They saw a couple of firefighters on the roof. They brought a couple of trunks over trying to get the aerial up and trying to get a tower ladder up. The building was too tall, I believe, and they hooked up the -- I believe they got out. They came down. A little while later I saw a couple of guys coming out of there, and the tower ladder started trying to put out the fire there.

We went up to Fulton and rather Vesey -- no, Fulton and Broadway. I think it was 212. They brought an engine down to try to pump more water to the tower ladder. We stayed in this area trying to help with the hoses, help the tower ladders getting set up on Building 4 and 5.

Q. Any other companies that were there with you besides the guys at 284?

A. I saw apparatus from tower ladder -- now I can't remember the numbers.

Q. I know.

A. It's a mess.

Q. Most of us can't remember too much of that day.

P. VASQUEZ

A. We stayed in this area for awhile.

Q. Those building were going pretty merrily.

A. Yes.

Q. I didn't get around to that point. I stayed on West and Vesey, West and Liberty most of the time there. I saw some shots of that, the two, four and five, and they were going pretty good.

A. I mean, they had a couple like three or four tower ladders going, but the pressure wasn't there.

Q. The pressure wasn't there. You couldn't do much with it, no.

A. Couldn't do much with it. We stayed in this area for awhile, and we started wandering around, and we came around to where like 6 and 7 were, and actually 7, we were coming down this corner going to try to find something to do, and that's when they were telling us 7 is going to go, 7 is going to go, so we kind of backed away.

Then we made our way back down. I believe it looks like Trinity here, and there was a building on fire. I believe it was -- I'm not exactly sure.

Q. I think 1 Liberty was on fire.

A. I'm talking about further down, down in here. There was a fire in the basement. We took some

P. VASQUEZ

hose off. I think it was 321, and we were trying to hook up to the standpipe, get water to the building's system, and then we went down into the basement of a building. We had -- the chief there didn't want anybody going down unless we had masks on. We had found masks. We went down, and we were trying to open -- force the door. We could feel it was hot, but they lost water pressure, so they evacuated the building.

And for a couple of hours they couldn't get water pressure. Saw smoke coming out of that building and we knew, you know, it was probably going, started going again rather well, but we just didn't have the pressure for it. You know, it was chaos, and nobody knew what was going on.

We did a search an of building. I don't even know where. There was a bar and a building next to it. It got hit pretty bad, looked like from debris and stuff like that. Did a quick search of the building, and it was empty. There was a dog in the bathtub, but it was a big dog, and we just left it there.

I mean, I think a little while later we made our way down to West and Liberty, see what was going on down there. There was nothing much we could do. Didn't look like anybody needed help.

P. VASQUEZ

A lot of guys hanging around, looking for something to do, and then I was going back up to Trinity, and that's pretty much where we stayed for the rest of the day.

Q. And then you just took off? Relieved or just too tired? How did you get back?

A. We were kind of tired, and then walked down to battery -- to the tunnel.

Q. You walked through the tunnel?

A. They gave us a ride through the tunnel, and the chief we were with, his car was parked on the other side, and he gave us a ride back to quarters.

Q. Great, good. Very good.

A. And, you know, everybody knows the water pressure seemed to be the biggest problem.

Q. Yeah, the water pressure was shot. We tried after the first collapse. We tried to test some hydrants, and they had water, but there was absolutely no pressure on them.

A. And then, you know, later on at night we helped them trying to search, but there was so many people on the pile, and too many people running over each other.

Q. Exactly. Nobody was hurt.

P. VASQUEZ

A. We went around trying to help out wherever we could.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTIS: I thank you.

That concludes the interview. It's approximately 11:15.

File No. 9110398

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PETE CASTELLANO

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTIS: Today's date is December 27, 2001. The time is approximately 1155 hours. I am Battalion Chief Art Lakiotis, safety command, New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with --

FIREFIGHTER CASTELLANO: Fireman Castellano, 149.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTIS: Fireman Castellano, Ladder 149.

This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Pete, if you just take me through when you started the response and how the events of the day just kind of unfolded for you.

A. I was working that day. We were scheduled for educational day. We got up to the rock. We went into house watch.

The first plane hit. We were watching it on TV. We started getting ready to go. The second plane hit. They told everybody go back to quarters, get your rigs and respond from quarters. We jumped in our cars, and we started going back to quarters. We took the BQE back to quarters. We got around the Manhattan Bridge. I saw Tower 2 come down.

P. CASTELLANO

We went back to quarters. Our rig was already gone. The night crew must have taken the rig, but we didn't know. We grabbed our gear. We started heading over to Manhattan. We got to the tunnel. They wouldn't let anybody through the tunnel, so we started going to the Brooklyn Bridge. We went to the Brooklyn Bridge. People were running over the Brooklyn Bridge.

We couldn't take the cars, so we started walking over. As we were going halfway over, a car came across with a couple of firemen, and we jumped on top of the car. We got across.

We walked down to Broadway. They had a command center set up there. The captain was looking for some men. He asked me if I wanted to work with him. We hooked up with him. We were waiting for orders. Meanwhile, guys were coming out of Broadway from the building.

Now, I'm not sure when the Tower 2 came down, if we were coming over the bridge or when we got onto Broadway, but the smoke got heavy again, and I seen Tommy McGoff, Lieutenant McGoff, coming from up Broadway. He was dazed. He just kept on walking. I tried to talk to him.

And then we went back to the command center,

P. CASTELLANO

waited more time, and we got no orders, so we kind of went on our own into the area, the trade center area. We met a chief. He was looking for tower ladder guys. We operated with him for awhile. We were ordered down from the tower ladder because of a possible collapse at Tower 7. We went from there -- we went to West Street.

Another chief asked us to search financial center Building 1, see if anybody was in the building. We started making a search of that building. We were ordered out of that building. We got -- like collapsed. We were ordered out of that building.

Came down. Sat around for a little while waiting for another command. Building 2 or Building 7 about this time came down. There's some things that we did between that time, but Building 7 came down.

Went back onto the pile. Started, you know, looking through the pile, and, you know, what we could find, and then we came off the pile again. We hooked up with more of our guys, and we went back to Church Street, because our rig was on Church Street. We were looking for the guys that were working that day, that night, the night tour, and we hooked up with some of the guys from the night tour.

P. CASTELLANO

We operated on Church Street with the tower. We did searches in buildings. Ten o'clock came. Some guys left. Some guys stayed. We hooked up with -- I hooked up -- me and Freddy with Vinnie Marsala -- hooked up with 18 engine and rescue 3, and we started working on a guy that was trapped on top of an elevator shaft, and I wound up working my way down to the elevator shaft.

I held the line for them while they tried to vent the hose. Worked there for a few hours. They relieved us. Another company -- another two companies relieved the guys that were in the hole. I came out of the hole, went back to the rig. Me and Freddy Marsala went back to the rig.

I got on the radio, and I asked the dispatcher -- it was around six o'clock in the morning. I asked what he wants us to do with the rig. I got the rig. There's nobody else -- me and another fireman at the rig. He told me to hang on for a second. Hang on. He'll get back to me.

About a half hour later, he got back to us. He says, "Get whatever equipment that you can get. Go back to quarters." So we took -- scavenged up whatever equipment we could scavenge up. We took the rig back

P. CASTELLANO

to quarters. We got our rig back into service at quarters and left the firehouse around -- I guess around 10 or 11.

Q. The lieutenant you said you saw, what unit was he from? Come up Broadway dazed?

A. Oh, like I seen Tommy McGoff, Lieutenant McGoff.

Q. From?

A. Downtown Brooklyn company. I found out later he was there when the first fireman was killed by a jumper, and he went to help the fireman, and half his company went into the tower, and they were lost, and he couldn't find them. That's why he was in the state he was in, but that was -- I heard that story later.

I didn't know what the story was. I tried to talk to him, but he just kept on walking, and that's -- and then there's a lot of other stories. You know, that's the basics of what I did that day.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTIS: Very good. The time is about approximately 12:05, and that concludes the interview. Thanks, Pete.

File No. 9110399

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FRED MARSILLA

Interview Date: December 27, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

F. MARSILLA

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 27, 2001. The time is approximately 1220 hours. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes. Safety Command, New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Fred Marsilla, Firefighter first grade.

Q. Ladder 149. Regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Fred, if you would just take me through your day as the events unfolded for you and your experience of that day.

A. Okay. As I recall, I was just about to finish my 24 tour, when we were watching TV, and saw the first plane hit, reports of it, and they didn't know what it was and the tour to come on wasn't supposed to be coming in that day because of educational day, so I had to wait until 9 o'clock to be relieved. Actually 9 o'clock came around and we were out of service at the time. I believe the second plane hit a little after nine, 9:03 or so. Being that we were all off duty technically, we had the response ticket saying that we were off duty.

Second plane hits and everyone is still here. We couldn't believe what we were seeing. Immediately our Lieutenant called over to the Chief and

F. MARSILLA

asked him if we were going to be in service or not. The Chief actually told him no, stay out of service. At that reply, Lieutenant told him no way, we are going to be in service, I'm calling dispatch to tell them we are going to stay in service. We did that and immediately after, we told the dispatcher, they sent us down to the mustering station at the Battery Tunnel. We were like 7th to arrive there. They sent 5 units across. The last unit I don't believe made it through. I think it was 228. They had closed it due to reports of a collapse.

As we looked in horror, the first one came down and that's probably what it was that caught them in there, much to our disbelief. We couldn't believe that this was happening obviously. No one could.

At this point, the Chief sent a few companies inside to help them, help get some of the civilians out that were stuck in the tunnel. They told us and the companies behind us start mustering at the Brooklyn Bridge. We went over there and were the first on the bridge. The amount of people that were coming over that bridge covered in debris was really an incredible sight.

Second one comes down at this point. They

F. MARSILLA

sent us over immediately after it comes down. We mustered, originally I believe at Church and Chambers. Actually, let me see what street I came over the tunnel with. I believe that was Chambers and Church. Perfect. Originally it was Chambers and Church. Then they sent us all the way down to Chambers and West, right by the Manhattan complex there.

Q. Stuyvesant High School, the big white bridge that's there?

A. Right.

Q. Yes.

A. Is that Manhattan Community College also?

Q. I think Manhattan Community College is on the east side and Stuyvesant High School is on the west side.

A. Right. That's where they sent us. We all took our gear and prepared to do what we had to do. Had a little scare there at Stuyvesant, saying there was a secondary device and we all ran. Upon reassembling, the Chief sent us down to Vesey and West. Upon getting down to Vesey and West, they told the officer to man Ladder 12. So I jumped in the bucket with another one of my members. They tried to supply us water as best as they could. It was very bad

F. MARSILLA

pressure. We were pouring water on, I believe the customs building there. Customs building, Ladder 3 and hazmat truck. Incredible, incredible stuff.

At this point, 7, which is right there on Vesey, the whole corner of the building was missing. I was thinking to myself we are in a bad place, because it was the corner facing us. But you do what you got to do as usual. We operated till they finally started pulling people back. At that point they had reports of people missing in the customs building garage. The officer went down there with a squad company, I believe, and he started searching. I followed him into the garage area and he told me to wait there for him and give him a guide in case he needed help out.

I waited there until he made it back out. He got back out.

Q. Do you know what officer that was?

A. Officer -- Lieutenant Stringer, yes. He went in actually --

Q. Lieutenant Stringer?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that your officer?

A. Uh-huh. Actually I waited at the garage door like he told me and provided light for him to come back

F. MARSILLA

and he finally came back and we reported back to Vesey and West. At that point, they were backing some of the units out. I don't exactly recall if we stayed there quite a while or not, but I do remember going around the Financial Center at that point, the American Express building, through the back yard there and you could see through the atrium.

Q. We must have passed each other a number of times?

A. Yes.

Q. Because I did that route a few times.

A. Then around that area and then as you came around, then you get the other view from the other side because it was closed off, that building, the pedestrian bridge going down. That whole other area was basically closed off to the rest of the units.

Got around to that side. That's when we saw the incredible things that took place and the amount of bravery that everybody was taking to try and help as best as they can. Bucket lines and people digging. Debris was incredible, how much of it was across the street. You couldn't even tell the street from the sidewalk. It didn't look like a big pile at first, but you realized it later on because it was a gradual

F. MARSILLA

outlaying of material. It gradually increased in height as you went along, so it was like climbing a hill, you really don't know how high you are until you are up there.

Q. The perception wasn't real till you saw firemen standing on the pile. You could barely see them.

A. Barely see them.

Q. Then you have a perception of the mass that was there.

A. How deep it was. And how high it is. I mean you were actually standing sometimes 15, 20 stories up. It wasn't that much of a fall, because there was a lot of material along the way.

Q. Yes, but it was --

A. It was just incredible. We operated there, I told the officer we should have a designated point where we should meet in case we get lost. So we operated there for a while and probably throughout the course of the day we got lost a couple of times from each other, but we always found each other back. Like I said, we were probably there from 10 o'clock till, I didn't say this before, but being that we worked that day, 10 o'clock till later on at that night, till 12 or

F. MARSILLA

so. And just running into the other brothers from our fire house, guys that called on recall. Somehow we all seemed to find each other.

We worked together for a while here. Worked together for a while there. Rested a little bit. They pulled us back, I think it was like probably between 4 and 6, because of 7. 7 was the concern at that time. I didn't even hear it come down. Didn't hear it come down.

Q. Where were you?

A. I was right by the marina. So I guess it was a building in front of me that protected me from the noise, the rubble, plus there was so much noise going on with the machinery and the people there. Lot of background stuff going on. Never saw it come down.

I guess they waited till it cleared up and then we went back in again, did what we had to do. Took quick breaks when we needed them, because at that point, no one was -- everybody was just -- work best you can.

Q. Running on adrenaline?

A. Yes.

Q. Yes.

A. 12 o'clock rolls around and most of the

F. MARSILLA

brothers at this point just wanted to take a blow so they could regroup for the next day. It might have even have been later, I just remember that time for some reason. We all walked over to 6, Engine 6. Some guys wanted to take showers, some guys wanted to clean up. They had no electricity, no water, so a lot of guys decided to just make it to the bridge. Some guys who came on the recall went in their own cars and they went home. I decided to stay. I just--- I couldn't leave.

Pete and I made our way back. Pete Castellano stayed with me. We made our way back to the scene. Actually cleaned up a little, found a place that did have water. Cleaned up a little, made it back to the scene. I believe we started helping the companies that were on the scene from the front of the building at this time. This point we found our rig, which was located on Church and Fulton. So we had a good reference point as to what to go to. They had operated on the plaza's buildings there in front.

Q. Number 5?

A. Yes, they were engulfed with fire I heard.

Q. I saw pictures of that. Never made it around there, but I saw pictures of it.

F. MARSILLA

A. Of it on fire?

Q. Oh, yes.

A. I didn't see that any of this.

Q. (inaudible)?

A. There was so much fire on every floor. Must have been a hell of a job just putting those out. Pete and I made our way down to the center between 4 and 5, and at that point they had located someone in an elevator shaft, so we all just, we formed a line passing stuff down.

Q. Bucket brigade?

A. Bucket brigade. It wasn't even a bucket brigade.

Q. But similar to it though.

A. Yes, similar to it.

Q. Bucket brigade with no buckets.

A. No buckets, just material. Acetylene torches and water and stokes and ladders. We were just passing them down to these guys. I stayed in the line with Pete. You know Pete, he's got to dig his nose in it there. He dug his way up to the front. He was actually helping them. He was holding the line for a while, trying to put down some of the fire, while all these guys were digging this guy out.

F. MARSILLA

Around 4:00 o'clock from there, we went back to the rig. At this point it's freezing cold and we are all wet. I managed to have an extra shirt that I gave to Pete to put it on. We sat in the rig for a while and the rig wasn't being used. They were trying to get new companies in and out of there. No one would give us a straight answer if we could pull our rig out or not.

So we found -- actually I think we asked the dispatcher, I told him there were only 2 companies with the rig and that they wanted us to remain on the scene. They said no, go back and be prepared for the next day tour. So we ended up getting our rig, I drove back, drove our rig back. We got back by 6, 6:30 maybe. At that point, the guys who slept over, the guys who were coming in were coming in as well, so I took a shower, shower, the guys started cleaning up the rig as best as they could. Replenishing whatever they could on it, being that everything is depleted.

Q. They were all stripped. All the rigs are stripped.

A. Absolutely, all the rigs were stripped. Actually, we did have our cylinders, though, so -- and our masks. 9 o'clock came around and I had to go home

F. MARSILLA

and see the family and appreciate them a little bit.

Q. Yes.

A. Then I went home for that day and came back the next day for 24 hours.

Q. Very good. It was a tough day for everybody.

A. Yes, absolutely.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: That concludes the interview. It is approximately 12:35. Thank you, Pete.

File No. 9110400

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER GERARD PISANO

Interview Date: December 27, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

G. PISANO

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is December 27, 2001. The time is approximately 14 hundred hours. My name is Chief Art Lakiotes, Safety Command of the New York City Fire Department.

Q. I'm conducting an interview with?

A. Gerard Pisano, Firefighter, Ladder 149.

Q. This is in regard to the events of September 11, 2001. Jerry, if you would, just take me through the day, how the events unfolded for you, and just kind of tell me.

A. That day we were assigned -- detailed to the rock for education day. As I was going to the rock, I was listening to the radio on the car, I heard that the first plane hit, a small commuter plane they called it. As I got to the rock, there was a TV playing in the front, and my Captain and three or four other members who were detailed there were watching the TV and we were assigned to come back -- actually as we were watching the TV, the second plane hit.

We were told right away to go back to our unit, where we would be, you know, everybody reassembled and probably get detailed down to the rock to the staging area, I mean to the site or to a staging

G. PISANO

area.

We did, we all got in our cars, we came back to the fire house. As we did that, the Captain that lives up the block was coming down the block. He took charge of us. About three or four cars got loaded up and we went to the staging area at, I believe Brooklyn Bridge. Actually we parked at Ladder 118's quarters, on that block, got together, we got as much hand tools and stuff. We walked over the bridge and we assembled over, I think it's Broadway and I forget what block that is. Let me see. Probably, yes, it was Broadway and Vesey. Right over there by Saint Pauls Church.

At that time it was -- you could tell there was a lot of things going on. We just waited to be assigned. That's about it. During the day, we were going back and forth. We were assigned to another officer and we were told to make a search somewhere, but we had no masks. We spent a good part of the day trying to find masks. There were no masks around. They were being worn by anybody that was on the recall, which I was pretty much. Working that day on the truck. So we had no masks. Then all we had was dust masks and that's all. We kind of like stood by for most of the day.

G. PISANO

Then into the night, we were digging on the pile. Just free hand, you know, just going down there and doing whatever we could do.

Q. What time did you finally get back to the fire house, how did you get back to the fire house?

A. Our own car, we went back to 118. We got --

Q. You walked back --

A. Bus or something. I think we got a bus that was going over the bridge. We started walking over the Brooklyn Bridge and a bus was coming back with a bunch of firefighters. They stopped for us, we got on there and they let us off right on the other side, which our cars were parked, 118. We got into our cars and we came back here. Stayed here.

Then I went back to the site, World Trade Center, the next morning at 9 o'clock. Then that schedule came down, the A, B and C, 12 on, 12 off. 24 on, 24 off. I think it was the first day.

Q. Then they changed it to 24 --

A. They changed it very fast.

Q. They changed it a few times.

A. Few times.

Q. Where were you when the buildings collapsed, do you remember?

G. PISANO

A. Yes, I was on -- I was in my car. I was on the BQE. Saw the first one, had a member in my car and I was driving and he told me there was -- that the building collapsed. I didn't believe him at first and then when I looked over, when I was able to look over, because I was following behind a police car, I was able to look over and I couldn't believe it. I saw the brown smoke.

Q. A lot of it. Amazing. Then were you at the Brooklyn Bridge when the second building came down?

A. No, when we came back. The second one, I think I was en route to the Brooklyn Bridge.

Q. Walking from 118's quarters?

A. Yes.

Q. It was very hard. A lot of people coming back the other direction?

A. Yes.

Q. Mass exodus. You were walking on the roadways or were you walking on the walkway?

A. I was on the walkway, and then actually one of the members was going across because he had all the tools in his car. I went across the catwalk to the roadway and I jumped into his car with a bunch of other people. Half the way over.

G. PISANO

Q. Were you there when 7 came down?

A. Yes, I was there when 7 came down.

Q. Where were you then?

A. I was -- look at the map. I actually -- I think it was on -- let me see this.

Q. 7 was up on Vesey and West.

A. Okay. Right. I think I was on Murray.

Q. Behind it.

A. Yes. We walked all -- we actually -- we were doing actually fire duty. It was an Engine with just an officer and a chauffeur and we jumped into the Engine. That's where we got our masks for the night tour. There was masks on the rig. We jumped on there and there was some car fires on one of these blocks down here. I think we were on either Park or Barclay. That's where we were. We were on Barclay and figure like Church. When 7 came down, maybe we were on Park.

When 7 came down, there was a Lieutenant and another member and they went down. The Lieutenant went down, he was walking and he took a bad feed of dust. So we saw him. We ran over to him. We picked him up. We dragged him about a block up to Park and into one of those lobbies of an office building in it. During that time, we were given a man down Mayday. Officer down,

G. PISANO

member down, and we got EMS there right way and we got oxygen to him and stuff. I think he's doing okay.

BATTALION CHIEF LAKIOTES: That's good.

Okay. This concludes the interview. It's approximately 1410.

File No. 9110401

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL REGAN

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

M. REGAN

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: December 28, 2001.

The time is 2:28 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Mike Regan of Engine 53 in the quarters of Engine 53.

Q. Mike, just tell us the events as you recall them from September 11?

A. Okay. Before we headed down to the Trade Center, we were assigned to a box on 42nd Street. We took that box in for a man stuck in an elevator. Took us a few minutes to get him out. We got back on the rig. They told us to stay 10-8. We started heading back, we started hearing Maydays and everything over the radio. Guys being stuck. We heard guys screaming, they were stuck under rigs. We weren't sure what was going on at the time.

At about that time, we got an okay from the dispatcher to head down that way. We shot across to the west side, we came up the West Side Drive, West Side Highway. We got off the rig. I don't know how many blocks. We were parked a few blocks north and we headed down. We got to about the pedestrian bridge, right off Liberty. Sorry, the one --

M. REGAN

Q. The north bridge.

A. The north bridge. Right near Vesey. People started screaming and running towards us that the second building was coming down. We were unaware that the first building even came down. We didn't hear anything over the radio on it.

Q. You were working in the truck?

A. Sorry, yes, I was in the truck that day. The Engine went down before us. They went down on --

Q. Ladder 43?

A. Right. Okay. As everybody was running towards us, we waited for the cloud to disperse a little bit. Then we started heading in. People were running towards us. I was giving oxygen to people that were gasping for air, and when we finally got in there, there were a couple of Chiefs and a couple of people yelling and screaming about you know, fire over there, secondary explosions and we stretched a line off a rig and started putting out fires, me and Jerry Suden. Lieutenant Rohan told us to stay with that, that we would team back up.

I guess we were operating for -- it's hard to tell time, I mean time, time was so -- but we put out, I don't know, a couple of trucks, a couple of rigs, a

M. REGAN

couple of civilian cars, then they started taking guys off the roof of, I think it was building 6. We helped them take them down in the stretchers. We got a few of them out. We teamed back up with Lieutenant Rohan.

He got an assignment to -- he heard there was a Mayday for -- Battalion 2 was stuck inside. We hooked up with him and Battalion Chief Ferran. So it was me, Jerry Suden, Lieutenant Rohan, Johnny Colon, all from 43 Truck, and we headed over towards -- we went down Vesey to Church Street. We went into building number 5. We headed down the escalator of building number 5 and then we headed up into -- looked like a big crater. We found out later on that Chief Picciotto had some kind of megaphone. He had that going, and we started heading up that way.

We made it -- couple of us made it up there. There were a couple of guys coming back down that were hurt, so me and I think it was Todd Frederickson helped them down, back out of the crater. We took them down, EMS met us down in the bottom of building 5. They brought them back up to the ambulance. We went back in and it wasn't as clear as it was when we first were in there. They already went ahead, Rohan and a couple of the other guys.

M. REGAN

We were calling for them. We couldn't get to them. They kept on going up. We stayed there for a while. We couldn't get in touch with them so Ferran was with us at that time. He came back out with us. We regrouped in building 5, we got a bunch of guys together, we went out on to Church Street and we got some tools. He wanted to go back in and try to find another way in. We ended up coming around Church Street. I think we went down Liberty over to the west side. We tried getting in that way. They ended up coming out on the west side. That's where we hooked back up with them. That's about all.

They wouldn't let us back in. I don't know what else.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. That's good Mike. Thanks a lot Mike, for your help. The time now is 2:34 p.m. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110402

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DENNIS FISCHER

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

D. FISCHER

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: December 28, 2001.

The time is 3:07 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion for the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Dennis Fischer, Firefighter from Engine 35 in the quarters of Engine 36.

Q. Dennis, just tell us the events as you recall them on September 11.

A. Okay, basically I remember being in house watch slightly after 9 o'clock and seeing an explosion in one of the Trade Centers and shortly after that while I was still in house watch, we actually watched live the second plane hit the second building. As far as I can remember, we started gathering up all the tools we could because obviously we knew something big was going down.

I think maybe 15 minutes after the second plane hit, we got the call to go down. The ticket came in and we headed down. We didn't know at the time on our way down, during our trip down on West Street, the first tower had collapsed. That we found out afterwards. We didn't even know the first tower was down. We arrived down on West Street. I believe we

D. FISCHER

stopped somewhere originally around West Street and Chambers Street and slowly we got a little bit closer. We had a Battalion Chief with us, got us a little bit closer so we weren't going to have to carry our equipment that far.

We passed a bunch of rigs parked along West Street. I'm not exactly sure where we stopped. I'm going to venture a guess it was somewhere between Chambers and Murray Street on the southbound side of West Street.

Q. Who was the Battalion Chief you were with?

A. Yes, actually I was with on Engine 35, it was Lieutenant Whalen was the officer that day and Billy Van Name was driving. I was on the -- I was in the back with myself, Keith Schroeder, Jim Powers, Brendan Lowrey and a Battalion Chief Mark Ferran also had jumped on the rig and came down with us and Lieutenant Mike Hadden also came on the rig with us. We had a total of about 8 people.

Chief Ferran was able to get us a little bit closer and we wind up parking. About that time, Chief Ferran and Lieutenant Hadden walked ahead of us a little bit, trying to find out what was going on and myself and the rest of 35, we grabbed our equipment,

D. FISCHER

our rollups, control bag and we started walking down West Street. Basically we made it pretty far down towards the Trade Center area. I believe we stopped somewhere between Murray Street and Vesey Street. I think we pretty much made it almost to Vesey Street and right behind an ambulance parked on the side of the road, a Lieutenant instructed us to drop our gear.

A couple of us looked up at the building. One of the firemen had mentioned he didn't think he saw the first tower. A couple of us gazed up and we weren't sure if we saw one or not. Time is kind of fuzzy, but I would say maybe a minute after we dropped our gear, the Lieutenant was going to walk up to the command post and find out what was going on.

He got maybe 40 to 50 feet ahead of us. At that point, a bunch of people started running towards us, running north on West Street. At that point, a police officer stopped briefly as he was running by us. He said guys -- can I say what he said?

Q. Yes.

A. Guys, get the fuck out of here that building is going to come down. It's coming down. That building is coming down. We looked at each other. We kind of looked around, we didn't really think it was

D. FISCHER

going to happen. Maybe 15, 20 seconds after he said that, we heard the rumbling. We looked up, that I remember as plain as day. I looked up and I saw from the top, I actually watched it with my own eyes, I saw the top start to pancake down. I remember looking at the probe I was with. We looked at each other in amazement. The time seemed to like stand still for a second. We looked at each other. We looked back up. We looked back at each other. It seemed like a bunch of time went by. It was probably like a fraction of a second. Everybody started just running the other way. I saw my Lieutenant as I was looking forward that was ahead of me running towards me, just waving me, just run, run. We just left our gear and just started running north on West Street.

I remember looking back and once it was all coming down, I was obviously far enough away where I wasn't going to be hit with debris, but I remember the cloud coming towards me and I remember thinking this is going to come get me faster than I can get away from this. I remember for a split second I wasn't sure if it was heat or smoke or -- I didn't know what was going to happen. I thought maybe we would get incinerated. I didn't know if it was just a ball of fire. I didn't

D. FISCHER

know it was just dust.

The cloud of dust pretty much caught up to us. It overtook us and there was never really a time though that you couldn't breathe. It was really thick around you, but there was never a time when you couldn't get enough oxygen. I remember in the confusion running, I lost most of the company, just took off for themselves, we lost each other. I remember following the light blue shirt of my officer and I wound up in Stuyvesant High School, a little bit further north. I just kept running until I saw him ditch off to the side. Somebody was waving us into the high school from the front doors.

I jumped into there, into Stuyvesant High School and found one other guy from my company. We stayed in there for about maybe 2 minutes, until the big cloud of dust. It was like black outside, completely black. Even after just a couple of minutes it started lightening up, so we figured it was okay. So we grabbed a couple of masks that were just random on the ground. There was equipment laying everywhere. Couple of guys were just taking a blow. Me and my officer took masks. We threw on the masks and we walked out of Stuyvesant High School and started

D. FISCHER

looking for the rest of our company.

Within about 15 minutes, we found everybody from Engine 35. A few of us were in the high school. We found a few guys on the street. We ran into Chief Ferran. We knew that we had everybody we came down with. Except for Lieutenant Hadden. The last we saw him, we knew that he walked further up north with Chief Ferran, but Chief Ferran had lost Lieutenant Hadden. Afterwards I know they might have been walking up, trying to meet people at the command post, so I teamed up with Chief Ferran and we searched the area for a little while.

Lieutenant Whalen and one of the other guys from 35 were searching the area. We switched to a different channel. We were looking back and forth to each other. A little bit of time went by, maybe 15 minutes, we found Lieutenant Hadden. We had everybody accounted for. After that we just did anything we could. We picked up a line here and there. We put out a couple of car fires and I would say within 20 minutes of the initial -- after the second collapse, myself, Keith Schroeder from 35 and one of the Lieutenants from 35, Lieutenant Hadden, we actually found a hand line from -- I'm not even sure, maybe 24 Engine somewhere,

D. FISCHER

it was a two and a half. We operated a line underneath the second foot bridge that was collapsed.

Q. The northern foot bridge, by Vesey?

A. Yes, the first foot bridge over there. It was collapsed in one spot. There was about a 3 foot opening. There was a void underneath about -- you were able to crawl. You couldn't stand up. There was one guy from Squad in there and another fireman. I don't know who it was, but there was a couple of crushed rigs under there and a couple of cars. The cars were on fire underneath there and so was the rig, so all we basically tried to do, we went for the rig first, we tried to extinguish the fire in the cab, hoping maybe we could find a fireman in the cab. It was crushed too far to get anybody out. We didn't even know if there was anybody in there.

The car fires, we tried to put out. They were starting to light up underneath there. We didn't have much room at that point. A Chief and my other Lieutenant from 35 just made a motion for to us get the hell out of there. They thought maybe that thing was going to come down on us. It felt like kind of a futile effort at the time. We were just doing anything we could. I guess that was -- I guess that pretty much

D. FISCHER

-- when we came out of the foot bridge, that had to be at least now about 45 minutes after the second collapse.

Then we just kind of regrouped and took a little blow after that. That was the immediate stuff that we did.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: That's fine,
Dennis. The time now is 3:15 p.m. This concludes
the interview. Thank you Dennis.

File No. 9110403

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TODD FREDRICKSON

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

T. FREDRICKSON

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is December 28, 2001. The time is 1:38 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Todd Fredrickson, Firefighter from Ladder 43 in the quarters of Ladder 43.

Q. Todd, just tell your story as you recall it from September 11.

A. We responded down West Side Highway, we didn't get that close because there were so many rigs backed up, so we got out of the rig. We started walking down. We got pretty much to West and Vesey when the building collapsed. A big cloud of smoke was coming down. We tried forcing the gate right next to a building in an effort to get everybody that was running down the street into somewhere that was a little more secluded.

But by the time we were getting through the gate, the cloud was already on us. I guess guys didn't know if it was going to be hot or not. Some guys were putting their mask on. It wound up not being hot and we just started making our way down the street towards the World Trade Center. On the way down there was a

T. FREDRICKSON

cop. I guess we had jumped in the back of his police car, which I guess you can't get out of once you got in.

We got him out of there and then we just kept walking down. There was a bunch of fires all over the place. Stuff burning across the street, cars, cars, rigs. It was -- someone gave a signal for an EMS, the police emergency unit, whatever it's called.

Q. A 10-13?

A. No, whatever the police's rig. Emergency response.

Q. ESU?

A. Yes, ESU. They had one of their rigs on fire. They said there was ammunition in there so we were stretching a line there initially to put that out. I started jumping up on rigs and just putting the deck guns on and spraying it wherever there was fire. It was all over. Then we realized that that wasn't really what was important right now so we started moving towards the rubble.

Someone gave a Mayday. I guess it was someone trapped under one of the pedestrian bridges. We started to go under there to look. One of the Chiefs pulled us out of there. He said don't go under

T. FREDRICKSON

there. I saw them -- it was pretty chaotic. So we started to move towards, I believe it was this building, it was a black building, US customs building. That was still standing or relatively still standing. I'm not sure if it was the lower portion of one of the buildings, like a vestibule. It was like 4 or 5 stories.

We put a ladder up. We went up there and there was a fireman that had been killed. He was obviously dead and we just put a -- his jacket over him and then we just kept searching. We hooked up with one of the Chiefs there, Mark Ferran. Me, Lieutenant Rohan, who else was there, Johnny Colon and the Chief were all up there. We had radio contact with Chief Picciotto and a couple of guys he was trapped with. We had no idea where they were. They were telling us where they were, but we didn't really know what everything was, because we are not familiar with the layout down there and it was very confusing as far as the rubble was all piled on top of everything.

So they said they were probably on the fifth, sixth floor of a building in the stairwell, so we started searching. We got up on that vestibule. We were searching in there. We couldn't really find -- we

T. FREDRICKSON

couldn't really get a good idea where we were going. We decided we would pull out of there and we searched for a while in there and a couple of stairwells and we realized that it probably wasn't even the right building, so we went back down and I think we came out back where we were. We came out on Vesey Street.

Then we decided to grab some tools and then we started heading down towards Church Street. Then we made a right on Trinity and we came in through the other side. A lot of it I'm confused about, where I was at particular times. We actually wound up coming down in through that underground area, promenade, I don't know what they call it, the lower portion of the Trade Center. Like there is a little mall down there.

We were just trying to get to where we thought they would be, so we came into this one area down below there. We sort of split up. The Chief and myself went up through this hole. Everybody else followed Lieutenant Rohan. We had hooked up with a couple of guys from our company, Bobby Markardt, a couple of other guys. I think Mike Regan was with them, I think Johnny Colon was there. Tom Corrigan. They had went into an escalator, they went sort of under the rubble and up an escalator. They went one

T. FREDRICKSON

way. We sort of branched out to try to have two prongs of getting them.

Me and the Chief went up through this hole up into the rubble and on top of the rubble. At that point, there was a security guard that was stumbling through the rubble and there was a fireman who had -- he had his bunker pants on and a T-shirt, and his suspenders. Everything else was missing. He was in bad shape. I was the only guy that had a mask on at that point.

I had it with me. I wasn't wearing it, and the Chief and other guys come and blow because there was still a lot of smoke in there and there was all smoke and it was hot. Chief is like, take these guys out. I took two guys. Actually there was another fireman there. I don't know what company he was from. This is after the buildings fell.

Me and that other fireman took -- actually the other fireman, I know what company he was from, but he said he was in the subway when it collapsed. He wasn't in the collapse itself, but he was -- I guess he just hugged the wall and he thought he was in badder shape than he was and he finally came up the subway and I just sort of wound up hooking up with him.

T. FREDRICKSON

Me and him dragged -- we got a security guard who could walk and the other guy was in bad shape. We dragged him out. He kept laying down and saying leave me. Leave me. I'm going to die. I said listen, get up, because there is other people that want to get out of here, so don't fucking play this game. He thought he was in the movies or something.

We dragged him out, we didn't go out the same way we came in. We went down the subway and back up the subway. I'm not really sure where we came out. I'm going to say we came out back over here because I was going in the original direction, then I ran into some firemen and they said your best way out is down the subway and back up. We took those two guys down, laid them in the street and one guy they just put in the ambulance and the other guy was just getting treatment.

Q. That was probably Church Street where you are talking about?

A. I'm going to say it was Church Street. Actually there was a picture in Time Magazine of just where we had brought the guy out. I don't know -- there was a subway station right there. I don't really know where it was, but assuming it was there, I grabbed

T. FREDRICKSON

a bottle of water and then I started heading back.

As I was going back, the Chief, he got turned around in the smoke or something and he couldn't find the hole that we came back up. So I started making a move towards him a little quicker. On my way there, they were pulling everybody out. So the Chief is like, you can't go in there, you can't go in there. I'm like well, there is a Chief trapped in there. I guess they thought that I was delirious or something. They are like oh, no, we searched in there. I'm like all right. Whatever. I wasn't going to stand there and argue with them, so I just kept going to where the hole I went in.

Went back up that hole. The Chief was -- I had to go into the hole and then walk a ways until I finally saw the Chief and I'm like Chief, over here. I went back out that hole. The radio was starting to die because we just had been using them so long. I mean this is going on for hours and hours. I'm just giving you the more pertinent points.

The Chief's radio was just about dead. Mine was still sort of working. We were getting calls from Chief Picciotto. He had a bull horn and he was hitting that off. We could hear where it was coming from, but

T. FREDRICKSON

all you could see was smoke. You had no idea if it was up or down. You knew it was up, but you didn't know if there was a drop or what was going on.

We started to make a move there and the Chief was like no, let's try coming from a different way, because it seemed like it was pretty far away from us. We went back out, I think -- I'm going to say it was just me and the Chief right now. I think we ran into Johnny Colon. We came back out to Trinity, I'm not really sure where we came out.

Q. Okay.

A. I'm going to say we came back out. We walked, I think around and we came back to West Side Highway and there was a bunch of Chiefs here. Then he was talking to the Chiefs for a while. Everybody was pretty shot, you know. We were drinking out of the can and everybody was pretty exhausted. We got there. There was a couple of Chiefs arguing. No one really knew what to do. It was pretty chaotic. The Chiefs are saying don't go in, don't go in, and then Chief Ferran was like, let's go in, we have to find these guys.

Now at this point we thought Lieutenant Rohan was lost too because their radios were dead and there

T. FREDRICKSON

was no contact with them. So now we are like, we lost those guys, because we didn't know what was going on there. We started headed back into the rubble and I think we went into the 3 World Trade Center. The building was half demolished. We went in, we climbed up over on top of the rubble till we get to a window. We went in the window and we searched in there for a while.

We hooked up with a retired guy and another guy, I don't know where he was from. We searched with those guys for a while. We searched that building and then we started making another move in and we got pulled out again, because I guess the Chiefs were getting more of control in the situation. They pulled everybody out of there.

They conversed for a while and one of the guys from 22, I think it was 22 or 13, his brother was lost in there. He is going what the fuck is everyone standing around here for, let's go in, let's give one more push, so I hooked up with him and two other firemen, went back in and searched around for a while. He started to realize it was sort of futile and everybody was shot. We pulled back out and that was pretty much the end of what we did.

T. FREDRICKSON

But I mean that was eight hours into -- I mean it was probably like four or five o'clock before we stopped. Then we all went down to the water. Then we ran into Lieutenant Rohan about a half an hour later. We realized that they were okay and that they had pulled out the Chief, Chief Picciotto, and the guys from, I think it was 6 or 7 truck. That's all the pertinent information I can think.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. That's good.

Thank you Todd, if you have anything else you want to discuss, okay. Well, thank you for your help. The time now is 1:50 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110408

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREMAN JOHN WANSLEY

Interview Date: December 29, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

J. WANSLEY

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 29, 2001. Time is 1240 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with John Wansley, Fireman first of the City of New York assigned to Engine 45. He was detailed to Ladder 58 on September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman Wansley please tell me what happened to you regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. Well, we relocated down at 20 truck. We were there maybe 10, 15 minutes. The first building collapsed. About 10 minutes after that, they gave us a box to respond down there for a woman trapped in a building. In the meantime there was a lot of people who were coming in. There was, you know, a total recall. We were putting extra gear on the rig. We responded down there. We got down there. I guess it was probably Cedar and Broadway. We took two steps off the rig and we just heard loud noise and figured it was the second building coming down and we ran around the rig, just dove behind the rig. The dust came and all of a sudden it was just pitch black and smoke. I thought I had seen some fire coming. I thought that was the next thing. I got up, I walked down the block about halfway down one of the blocks away from the

J. WANSLEY

buildings, I turned around, looked, I seen there was no fire there. I turned around. I walked back to where the rig was.

We all regrouped. We grabbed some tools, saws, hooks and everything else. We made our way and ended up over on West Street on the other side. When we got over there, one of the Chiefs had told to us to go look for 65 Engine. That's pretty much what we did. We started climbing up through the pile and looking for 65 Engine and anything else you could find. We just ended up somehow stretching lines. We went up into the pit up there with a line.

We just operated for a few hours, then we all regrouped back over where our rig was and I ended up in the hospital that day because I couldn't see no more. I had to go get my eyes cleaned out. That was pretty much it.

Q. Okay. When you said you saw the recall was in, do you know the people that got on your rig when you responded, were they from 20 truck?

A. I have no idea. There was just a lot of people coming in. I think there was a Chief from that quarters. I think maybe a squad was even in there, so it was a lot of people coming in.

J. WANSLEY

Q. When you say your rig was at Liberty and Broadway?

A. I think that's where it was.

Q. You walked down the street towards Cedar?

A. When?

Q. When you first responded.

A. We just stepped off the rig and as soon as we got off the rig the building came down. We weren't standing in the street two seconds as the building came down.

Q. Did you see any other companies parked when you pulled up?

A. No.

Q. You said the Chief. Do you happen to remember what Battalion or anybody that said to go look for 65? Did they indicate where they thought 65 was, any location?

A. No.

Q. They just said that way?

A. I'm not even sure if it was a Chief who said it. Somebody had said go look for 65, Engine 65. We just started climbing over through the pile. Never found it either.

Q. Did you see any other companies doing

J. WANSLEY

basically what you were doing, do you have any idea what your location was at that point?

A. Yes, I know exactly we were where. We were actually where the south bridge comes across. Across --

Q. Liberty and West?

A. Yes, I guess that would be. It was definitely West Street. 90 West Street is right there on the corner. Right there where one bridge was still up. That's where we went ended up coming that block right there. When we got there, somebody said go look for 65 Engine. I don't know who it was. Maybe it was just -- you know what, at first we ended up staging where all the ambulances were for a few minutes there. Then we ended up going right over right to where the bridge was. I don't know who it was. It was just a boss that told me we got to go find 65 Engine. See if we can find 65 Engine.

Q. Were there any other companies with you?

A. Yes, there was other companies operating in the area.

Q. But you don't know who they were?

A. Not assigned with us, no.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Is there anything

J. WANSLEY

else you can remember? If not, the interview is over. Thanks.

File No. 9110409

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JAMES WALLACE

Interview Date: December 29, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: Today's date is December 29th, 2001. The time is 12:50 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, Firefighter James Wallace of Ladder 58 of the Fire Department of the City of New York, at the quarters of Engine 45, Ladder 58 in the office of Battalion 18, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Wallace, tell me what happened to you on September 11th.

A. Okay. We got relocated to Ladder 20. We were there maybe ten minutes. The first building had fallen down, collapsed. We got a report of a lady trapped in a building on Cedar Street. We responded. We went down Broadway. We got to Liberty, and we stopped the rig. As soon as we stopped the rig, we got off, it wasn't even a second, the second building fell down.

At that time we got hit with a heavy cloud of smoke and debris, and we just ran to the other side of the rig, finally got our face

pieces on. It took like five minutes. We regrouped. It started to lift a little bit. We said we've got to go in there and see if we can get anybody out.

We took forcible entry tools, saws, everything, and we got in there. We couldn't get past Liberty and Cedar, so we went around the back to West Street. When we got to West Street, we were there a little bit, met up with some other companies. We went in underneath the walkway, catwalk, whatever you want to call it.

There were rigs everywhere, a rescue rig. As I was saying, people trapped. We heard maydays. We were just climbing over debris, under debris. Cars on fire, ambulances on fire, upside-down. Everything is all over the place. Crawled around, looked, looked, looked. We didn't come up with anything.

Rescue was in the middle of the pile at the time. They got jammed up. They needed a line. We stretched a line with 14 Engine. We operated with Rescue 3. We operated with them for a little while. We still didn't come out with anybody.

After that as time went on, we just kept searching. They were saying building seven was going to collapse, so we regrouped and went back to our rig. We went to building four or three; I don't know. We were going to set up our tower ladder there. They said no good because building seven is coming down.

We waited for building seven to come down. Then we went around the corner with our tower ladder, set that up and shot water on it until about 12:30 at night. We got relief finally. Then we went to the hospital, got our eyes washed out.

That's about it.

Q. When you said you heard any maydays, any identifying names or any companies that you could recognize from the maydays?

A. No.

Q. You just heard a lot of maydays; right?

A. Right.

Q. You said you were operating with other companies. Any idea who they were?

A. Like I said, 14 Engine we stretched the line with. Rescue.

Q. All right. 14 Engine, they were what, Liberty and West by that south walkway?

A. It was like maybe an hour into the operation when rescue went into the middle of the pile. They needed a line, so we helped them.

Q. I'm just saying 14, I'm trying to find out where you hooked up with them. Any idea?

A. When rescue said they needed a line, 14 Engine, the chief assigned us to work with them and that was it.

Q. Okay. If you can't remember anything else or if you have anything else to add.

A. If I think of it, I'll let you know.

Q. Was it a battalion chief?

A. Yeah. He just got promoted too. He was the guy that got the engine -- who was that guy? When he got the medal?

MALE VOICE: I don't know. Oh, Warner.

A. Warner.

Q. Oh, Ron Warner?

A. Warner.

Q. Battalion Chief Warner told you to stretch the line?

A. Yes.

Q. That was near building three?

A. No. That was by the motel.

Q. By the motel?

A. Yes.

Q. And that's --

A. Liberty and West.

Q. Liberty and West.

A. Right underneath the catwalk.

Q. Okay. Anything else that you can think
of?

A. That's it.

CHIEF KEMLY: Okay. Thank you very
much your time.

File No. 9110410

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MARK WESSELDINE

Interview Date: December 29, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

M. WESSELDINE

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 29, 2001. The time is 13 hundred hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter first grade Mark Wesseldine of Ladder 58 of the Fire Department of the City of New York. The interview is taking place in the office of Battalion 18 in Ladder 58's quarters, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Firefighter Wesseldine, please tell me what happened to you on September 11, 2001.

A. I was detailed to the rock for the day tour to teach educational day. Basically we didn't get the program started. Once the first plane hit we basically went into the office to watch what was going on. When the second plane hit, Chief Santangelo told us to shut everything down and send everybody back to their own quarters and wait for an assignment. With that, he told our members, everybody at the rock to start getting their gear and assemble, and that they were going to get a bus to bring us to the site.

With that, everybody assigned to the rock has gear there. I didn't have any gear so I just got in my

M. WESSELDINE

truck and drove downtown on my own. I was fortunate enough I had a red light behind my seat from when I used to be a volunteer Fire Chief, so the Police Department waved us right in. I went down and parked -- I was parked on Canal and Church Street. I was parked on the sidewalk. I was basically running up Canal Street, figuring that I could just basically carry bottles, doing something. I didn't need gear to carry bottles up and downstairs. I was somewhere, I was somewhere in the vicinity of Park, close to Park, somewhere right around there. There was a lot of people coming out. I mean just mass people just leaving, as would be.

I saw rigs, I don't recall any numbers, but they were just basically parked there on the way in in different locations. Next thing you know, you could hear the noise. You could hear the wind blowing and then the dust came and once the dust came that was it. I was asking the people that were running what was happening, they said the building just came down. I didn't think the building came down but that's what it was. It was the first building. This was, I don't know, 10 o'clock, somewhere around there, because it took a while to get down there. Then it was just, you

M. WESSELDINE

couldn't see nothing. You couldn't breathe. You couldn't do nothing. I said well I'm useless here now. I had to wait a little while for the dust to settle, then I went back, got my truck, drove up here and at that time, there was I guess a total recall so all the off duty guys were just starting to get back in.

Captain Principio was here. They just assembled us. We got our gear together, got what tools and what not together and we went to the Division and then we took a bus back down there. We didn't operate for a couple of hours later after that. All we did was go in and they told us to -- with the company they told us to go in and find a rescue collapse rig, see if it was serviceable. We went in and found that. We reported back and then they had us do victim tracking.

That was basically until later on in the day. We didn't do anything until later on in the day. I didn't report in to anybody because I never actually got to the site, because you couldn't see where you were going at that point.

Q. When you went to the rescue collapse rig, do you know where it was located?

A. It was on West Street, but I don't know the

M. WESSELDINE

corner street. Because we actually went in, went through a couple of buildings around back and came out on the other side. That's where we found it. Who was there? Nick was with the rig. I can't think of his last name last name right now. Nick Giordano was with the rig already from Rescue 3. So when we came back we had told the command post that there was a guy from Rescue 3 member with a rig, it couldn't have been moved at that point, but there was somebody with the rig and it was intact. I mean it was damaged but it was intact.

Q. Anything else you can remember?

A. Nothing I don't think of any importance on the initial one. Like I said, by the time we got in there it was hours later and there was plenty other guys in there already doing work. All we did basically was dig and check and search ambulances in that courtyard when we got there later on that night.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: If you have anything further, otherwise the interview is over. Thank you for your time.

File No. 9110411

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICARDO RODRIGUEZ

Interview Date: December 29, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

R. RODRIGUEZ

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Today is December 29, 2001. The time is 1320 hours. This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter first grade Ricardo Rodriguez of Ladder 58 of the City of New York Fire Department. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 58 in Battalion 18's office regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Fireman Rodriguez could you tell me what happened to you on September 11?

A. All right. We initially got the call here to respond and relocate over to quarters of Ladder 20. We arrived there. We were there probably a half an hour or so. Second plane hit. Tower came down, second fifth alarm was given. We were told to respond down to respond down to I believe somewhere around Church Avenue and -- Church Street. Building somewhere down there. There was a report of a woman trapped. We were slightly delayed because members that had come back from Ladder 20 were piling on to the rig with their equipment. We had about 15 guys strapped on to the outside of the rig. We headed down there. We went down -- we worked our way to West Broadway. Headed

R. RODRIGUEZ

straight down West Broadway. We got to West Broadway and Liberty. That's where we stopped the rig, Lieutenant Scotto decided it was safer to just stop the rig and not get any closer than that, which I don't think we could have, because there were girders in the street going down Liberty.

As soon as we stopped the rigs, guys got off the rig. I was probably the last one. I was sitting behind the chauffeur. I was probably the last one getting off the rig. When I got off the rig I could see the chauffeur -- I heard the chauffeur yell something. He was running up Liberty Street. I turned, I could hear a rumble, I turned and all I saw was this huge black cloud, 50 story black cloud coming at us. Only thing I could think of was to duck. It hit us. We were choking for a while till I was able to clear my mask and put it on. We had 3 civilians near us that were choking. We tried to give them air as well.

Once it cleared some, guys came back -- some of the guys that ran -- there was a man in one of the buildings that opened the lobby door and yelled to the guys to run in. They went there. Well, as they got back together we got everyone -- make sure everyone was

R. RODRIGUEZ

safe, got together, we grabbed every tool we had and we proceeded down Liberty Street. We went down Liberty Street, as far as 10-10's quarters. Because of the debris field we couldn't go any further than that. We went through their quarters, came out the back of their quarters, headed south about another block or so and made our way over to West Street.

At that point I would say it was like midnight all through this time. By the time we hit West Street, we started working our way up West Street towards the towers. That's when it started to clear and you started to see a little bit of daylight.

We got to that point there and we were probably under the walkway. At that point we just went into the pile. There was a Chief up there giving out orders, whatever, but the radio was a mess, with all the Maydays and everything else. The only person I could recognize up there up on the pile was Ralph Tiso, Captain Tiso from rescue. He was searching around up there and found, I think it was some members trapped on the other side of the other pile. At that point the Chief yelled to everyone help stretch a line, we stretched the line. We operated a line to get those members back across.

R. RODRIGUEZ

After that it was just basically searching around. I really don't remember much more than that, taking a break around 2 in the afternoon. Then going back later that day. We were told to get our rig, because number 4 was totally involved and so we went, made our way back to Liberty and Church. The rig was gone. So we eventually wandered around until we finally found the rig on Vesey and Church. I think Ladder 120 was setting it up at the time.

We took the rig back over at that time and then some Chief came up and said he wanted the rig out of there because what was it, 6, number 6 building was going to come down. So we ended up pulling the rig up another block or so. Eventually he ordered everyone over by City Hall.

That was it.

Q. When you went into that hallway, the guy pulled you in?

A. I was by the rig. I never had a chance to leave the rig. About 3 or four of us that was stuck right by the rig. There was no chance.

Q. Did some of your company go down that hallway or was that the guys from 20?

A. The chauffeur, William Smith and I think

R. RODRIGUEZ

there might have been a couple of guys with him that went into that building, I'm not sure. Like I said it was -- I just remember myself, Matt Hagan being right opposite, because he had the jump seat next to me so he was right alongside me in the rig. There were 3 civilians that were standing up in the street gawking when we pulled up. So they got hit there.

Q. When you went through 10 and 10's quarters, you said you went through their quarters?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you see anybody in there?

A. There was someone in there that came out to us and said listen, you guys can make your way through here. I can't remember who it was. So we went that way. We went through there. Because we were going to attempt to try to start climbing up above. He said no, you are not going to get through there, come through here. We worked our way back through the back of 10-10's quarters.

Q. Anything else you can add or is that it?

A. No, that's it. Like I said, after City Hall, after that, after number 6 fell, later on we were called to set up the rig over on -- I forgot what street.

R. RODRIGUEZ

Q. Vesey and West you said before?

A. That's where it was initially, but we had to move it down another block and then down a block so we could hit what was going on in 6.

Q. When you heard the Maydays, could you identify anybody that was giving them, did you hear at all?

A. No, not at all. The only one I remember was the voice of one guy saying he was choking, he couldn't breathe.

Q. But he didn't identify himself?

A. There was just so much going on on the radio, so much traffic, between Maydays and the urgents.

Q. Captain Tiso, that was the Captain in Rescue 3, you said Rescue. I just wanted to make sure it was Rescue 3.

A. Right.

Q. That was towards West and Liberty when you were under that walkway?

A. West and Liberty, yes.

Q. You don't remember the Chief?

A. No, I don't remember the Chief.

BATTALION CHIEF KEMLY: Okay, anything else, otherwise the interview is concluded. Okay, thanks for your time.

File No. 9110412

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JAMES CURRAN

Interview Date: December 30, 2001

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

J. CURRAN

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: December 30, 2001.

The time is now 1233 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview today with Firefighter sixth grade James Curran of Ladder Company 8. We are in the quarters of Ladder Company 8. There is nobody else in the room. This interview is in regards to the events of September 11, 2001. What follows is the interview with Fireman Curran.

Q. Take it away.

A. Okay, a guy called the fire house about 8 o'clock and asked me, it's not an emergency but I have been smelling gas in the area of my house. He lived on 313 Church Street. He asked if we would follow up on it, so I told him to call the non-emergency number for the Fire Department. They will decide if they want us to go check it out or not. So we did. At 8:30, we got toned out for odor of gas on the corner of Church and Lispenard.

Us, Engine 7 and Ladder 1, we all responded with the First Battalion. We were there for 5, 15, 16 minutes. We had found out what grate the leak was coming from and our Chief Pfiefer was bent over with the gas meter. We heard the plane, we looked up. It

J. CURRAN

was low enough that it rattled the buildings we were standing at. We saw it come out from behind the buildings and hit tower one and like I said, a fireball, looked like 10 or 20 stories big, shot out the south side of the tower and then out the hole that the plane made going in.

We all jumped in the rig, geared up, drove down. We had a straight shot. All the cars were pulled off to the side and people were looking at the building. We went down, I believe we went down Lispenard to the West Side Highway. Made a U turn and we couldn't pull in any closer. We tried to get into the taxi indent, but there were people on the ground burnt on the West Side Highway to where you would have had to run them over to get any closer. So we got out of the rig, went in the lobby. Engine 7 pulled up right behind us and Ladder 1 was behind them I believe.

We went in through the revolving doors. There was a mini lobby. There was like brown haze, smoke in the lobby. A lot of the marble slabs were falling off the wall, cracked. There were two people in like the little section of this lobby. One guy was burnt pretty much to a crisp and his jacket was the

J. CURRAN

only thing left on him. Put that out with a can and then there was a lady off to the right of us that was alive but she was screaming that she couldn't breathe. So I hit her with the can and cooled her down.

Q. Where did these people come from?

A. I don't know if they were in the elevator or what not, but they were the only two people I saw in the lobby and they were right in the entranceway. Like I said she was still smoking when we got in there. The other guy was dead and she was just screaming that she couldn't breathe.

After I used I guess about a half a can on her, we went through the lobby. All the elevator banks were kind of blown out at probably 70 degree angles, 60 degree angles, and there is all rubble and spot fires in the lobby.

Q. Where did that come from?

A. I think they said that the fuel went all the way down the elevator shaft and when it finally hit rock bottom it blew out all the elevators.

Q. Is that it?

A. That's what I have been hearing. I don't know. I don't think anybody really knows. It was pretty much rubble in the whole lobby walking through.

J. CURRAN

We got back to the escalators and the police had people running down both escalators trying to keep them calm. We finally got them to channel them all down one so we could get up. We went up there, looked towards the courtyard and all the windows were stained, people hitting the courtyard I guess.

We went around the inside ledge that was between the elevator shaft, the corner of the building and the escalators. This stuff was still dropping and breaking the windows. We walked all the way around again trying to find a working elevator. There was finally one right near the command post, by the silver desk in the northwest corner of the mezzanine level. It was working. Lieutenant Halloran made the call, he was like no, we aren't taking the elevator. In this case we will walk. I believe that's the elevator that 20 truck and squad 1 wound up catching and went to the 16th floor.

We rested on I think the 19th floor was the first one we rested on and we were just walking up. People were coming down.

Q. You had orders to go up, was there a Chief there or you just start decided to start going up?

A. No, at that point First Battalion I think was

J. CURRAN

the only Chief there. So he was kind of overloaded so Lieutenant Halloran made the call. Let's just get up there, we got to go up and get people down and out.

Q. Right.

A. So we started up. I think we were on the third or fourth floor when the first person we saw had both of her arms burnt. She was coming down. I don't know what floor she had come down from, but we were going up. It was us, Engine 7 was with us because their Captain had a roll up. We were all kind of just working together. That's why we only made it to the 30th floor because we were going slow instead of killing them. We had 90 floors to go.

So we were walking up. I think some guys from 33 Engine were with us. When we rested on the 19th floor, a guy from my class from 9 truck jumped in. He was with us. So like 28 Engine is right behind us actually going up. I didn't see any of them until we were going down. We went up, we rested on like the 19th floor. There were people on that floor getting out, going down the stairs. We made sure all of them, they had an open spot to file into. We rested probably 10 minutes there. We made another push and then we stopped on the 23 floor because there were people

J. CURRAN

there. That was the first time that we had a break for water. They gave us water out of their offices. That's again when I ran into John Tierney from Ladder 9. I realized he was with us.

After the 23, actually we were sitting on the 23, when I don't know -- it wasn't the tower going down, but the building shook and vibrated. I was sitting right next to the first elevator shaft, just my sleeve was in front of me. There was a breeze strong enough coming out, it ruffled my shirt and we all just dove into the stairway. Probably I dove about 5 guys just stacked 5, 6 guys out. Then it subsided. At this point the air conditioner was still working. Everything in the building was still functioning fine. We just didn't know what it was.

We went back out, got our bunker coats on, went up again. It was real slow going up because there were people coming down and with your equipment, trying to squeeze by them and at the 30 floor we stopped again. We had to make another push. We had thrown gear down. We had our masks on the floor. The only thing I kept my gloves and my helmet in my hand at all times. I called my mother from the 30 floor. I was talking to her on the news when she freaked. She

J. CURRAN

watched tower two come down while we were on the 30 floor. I was on the phone with her. I told her I will call you back. I got to go. She didn't know if we were going up or down at this point.

I don't know what Chief it was. I didn't see him before it and I didn't see him after, but he is the one that made the call, all FD get out now. We are going down staircase B.

Q. He was with you?

A. He popped out of nowhere. He wasn't with us going up, but he came out of nowhere, he had bull horn and he is saying everyone off the phones, all FD, we are leaving now.

Q. No reason, he didn't give you a reason. He just get out?

A. Yes, actually said get the F out. I don't want to use profanity. He stressed we are leaving, we are leaving now. Let's go. There was probably 60 of us on that floor. What companies I don't know. Because I think there were all different floors congregated on the 30th. We were all walking over to where our equipment was, our masks, all that. He said you don't have time, leave everything, let's go.

We started going down and on the way down,

J. CURRAN

there weren't many civilians. There was the one heavy set lady that I know Ladder 6 wound up getting out. We had her at first, big -- we took her probably about 10 floors. She had to rest so 33 Engine, I believe it was, 33 -- I'm not sure, they said oh, we got her now. So they were taking her. Then I guess 6 truck wound up getting her in the end.

But we went down and there weren't -- there weren't really any -- the last civilians that we saw that were around we let go in front of us. Going down I know 28 Engine was with us. 33 Engine had a few guys with us. John Tierney from Ladder 9 was the guy behind me on the stairs. 7 and 1 we were with still. Guys in my company remember seeing some guys from 20 truck. We saw guys from Rescue 1 branching off on to a floor when we were going down.

Q. What stairway were you in, do you remember?

A. B.

Q. B stair?

A. Yes, to the ninth floor. At the ninth floor, an engineer told us we are going to switch staircases. Because at that point that was the staircase everyone had found blocked when they got to the bottom. At that point we switched to staircase A. That led us down to

J. CURRAN

the west side of the tower on the ground, ground level, I don't know if it has a name. We were all in the lobby. There was -- I don't know, the whole lobby from where the stairs were to where they had whoever was in charge down there. It was probably, I don't know how many firemen. Probably 10 or 11 companies (inaudible). They were all standing around I guess waiting for an order. That's Danny Murphy made the call. He was like tower two went down, what's holding this one up. I think we should leave. It was almost like that's the call everyone was waiting on. I can't remember who said it but someone said get out.

Q. Who is Danny Murphy, who is that?

A. He is one of the senior guys, he was working with us that day. As soon as he said that, all the heads turned and they started filing out. I don't know how many companies got out before us but we finally broke into the line. We started going out. I was the second to last guy from my company and then Sal was behind me, Sal Butera and Lieutenant Halloran.

We started filing out and following the line of the building. I got just to underneath the north walkway. A guy started screaming to run. When I got underneath the north bridge I looked back and you heard

J. CURRAN

it, I heard like every floor went chu-chu-chu. Looked back and from the pressure everything was getting blown out of the floors before it actually collapsed. I ran north up the West Side Highway. Sal ran west somewhere and got blown off, got burnt on the back of his back and went to the hospital, but I ran north. Everyone in front of me was a ways in front of me. I didn't see anyone behind me.

The Captain from Engine 7 and me came out the cloud just about the same time. We went over, washed our faces off at a hydrant and I went back down, once I teamed up with the rest of my company. Me and Danny Murphy went down to look for Lieutenant Halloran and all the other guys were going down looking for their people.

Like I said, I don't know what it was when the building shook when we were on the 23. Everyone seemed to think it was the tower going down, but I don't think so. When we were on the 30th is when I was on the phone with my mother and she watched it on the live on the news collapse while we were in the 30th.

Q. How long did it take you to get from the 23 to the 30?

A. Not long, probably another 15.

J. CURRAN

Q. So the first shaking couldn't have been the plane hitting tower two?

A. No, we were on the 16 floor when it was confirmed that another plane hit tower two. At that point, someone that was supposedly Secret Service, which disappeared, we never knew where he went, he said there was a third incoming flight. That was --

Q. He was telling everybody that.

A. At that point, I didn't know if -- we looked at each other and like well, do we go up, do we go down. At that point it's like well, if it's going to hit our tower it's going to hit our tower, let's keep going up. Turned out to be a false report but we couldn't find the guy after he said that.

Q. (inaudible)?

A. Vanished. I don't know where he went.

Q. Who was the Lieutenant from 8 truck?

A. Lieutenant Halloran.

Q. Was he on duty that day or was he volunteering?

A. Yes, no, on night tour, the only reason we were even all there was our company was out of service at 0900 for company medicals. So we had to ride till 9. He was on the night tour. I was the only one that

J. CURRAN

wasn't on my normal schedule. I was working for a guy who was working --

Q. Where was he, was he with you when you were climbing the stairs, were you guys all together?

A. We got split up at one point. But we all met up 6 floors later because him and Kevin Dinkins wound up going up straight to the 30th and when we stopped with the Captain from Engine 7. Maybe another 15 minutes we were all linked up again on the 30th floor. Actually me and him, we had gone up to the 31 and forced the door. As soon as you took it you smelled jet fuel right away so we shut the door.

We said all right, we will go back down to 30th where the rest of the guys are. There were probably 6 of us that went up there. When we went down that's when I decided to make a phone call because my mother works at the Bank of New York building. I was just calling to make sure she was all right and tell her to leave, which she was, but she was at home. She didn't make it in. That's when tower two went down. I was on the phone with her.

Q. Where did this Lieutenant go, when was the last time you saw him?

A. When we were in the lobby, we all collected

J. CURRAN

right near the command post, but then after Danny said what he said about we should get out, we had already started making our way over, but all 6 of us were at that pillar of painted glass that we wound up walking out.

Like I said, the only thing I can think of is either once he got us out he went back, maybe just to tell the Chief for accountability. 8 trucks out. My guys are out, I'm leaving or he might have walked out right behind us and something hit him. He walked back in.

Q. You guys were exiting the lobby of the north tower and that's about the last time you saw him --

A. Yes.

Q. You are not sure whether he went back in?

A. As soon as we started filing out, was the only time we got separated the whole time down there. But it was just one of those things. It was such a short time from when we were filing out to when we heard run, that, you know, maybe we would have gotten to the north bridge to where stuff would have hit us and collect again, but we didn't even have the chance to do that. We were just going underneath the bridge when the guy started screaming run. That's the only

J. CURRAN

time we really got separated.

Q. What happened after the north tower came down, what did you wind up doing?

A. Like I said we ran up north. I got just past the beginning of the phone company building when the dust cloud came. I went up there, we cleaned our faces up a little bit, got some of the concrete out from us. Cleaned ourselves up a little bit. I wound up finding Danny Murphy. Everyone got separated. It was just bunker gear running everywhere. Once Danny saw me, he grabbed me. He is like let's go. So we walked right back down calling for Lieutenant Halloran.

There was guys coming up around us. We were asking like yes, we saw him back there. So we thought he was --

Q. Okay.

A. Standing out on the West Side Highway. But we went down and then once you were actually down, no, I haven't seen him, I haven't seen him. We looked for about an hour. That's when we finally went back to the fire house to call our families and say listen, we are all right, this and that.

Q. How did you get back to the fire house?

A. We walked. We all gathered what tools we had

J. CURRAN

here and we walked back down and then the recovery had been started. Like you said I don't know what it was on the 23 floor. But definitely it wasn't the tower going down. The only thing I heard on the radio -- I heard lots of Maydays going up. Guys having chest pains on like 10, 11th floors.

Q. You can't climb with bunker gear, I couldn't do it. I'm surprised you guys. 19 floors you said before you stopped. I couldn't do more than 5 floors. You are young -- but a lot of guys --

A. The only thing that saved you, with everyone coming down, you had to stop at every half landing, so you only did it half a floor at a time. By the time we hit the 19th, we were --

Q. Yes. How long do you think it would have taken you to get to the 80th floor if you had gone to the 80th floor?

A. I'm guessing probably 4 hours, 3 and a half. It took us just about an hour, maybe a little over an hour, to get to the 30th.

Q. The Engine companies that you saw were they carrying rollups up?

A. I think that's what saved us actually, because the Captain from Engine 7 was an older

J. CURRAN

gentleman. He knew that they would need an extra roll up so he grabbed one. He was hurting, we stopped, we always stayed with him. We never left him. Every time -- he lasted as long as us, I'm surprised, because we were all ready to stop every time we did. The stops were getting more frequent. We stopped on the 19, then we stopped on the 23. Then we stopped on the 30th. We probably would have stopped every nine, 10 floors after that.

Q. You have to do that. You had to do that or you would have a heart attack.

A. Thank god the air conditioner was still working. On the 30th floor is when the electricity went off. The lights went out and then the fire alarm systems started going off. The only thing on there was strobes.

Q. Could you see then? Were there emergency lights in the stairway?

A. No, actually the staircases's emergency lights weren't on.

Q. So what were you doing?

A. One of the night guys had flashlights.

Q. You had your flashlights?

A. Yes, but I think the floors that were already

J. CURRAN

passed, I think people chopped the doors open so light coming in from the windows. It wasn't light, but it was still I guess enough guys with flashlights and whatever, you could see. What's weird is the smoke condition on the floors actually got worse on about the 22 floor. John Tierney actually asked me, he is in my class, he recognized me right away. He is like you want some air from my mask, because I left mine on the 30th. I told him no, in case you need it keep it, and he didn't make it. He was two guys behind me on the stairs and he didn't make it.

I think me and Sal were pretty much the last two out of the building before it came down. I think the guys behind us, I think they all ran west or south.

Q. That wasn't good.

A. No. If you ran north you were unscathed. I think Sal ran like northwest. He got knocked down and thrown I think like 20, 30 feet. Stuff was laying on him. He was actually laying on the ground next to a Chief. He forget his name. The guy said his name. He was like oh, it's good to not be alone at this time. They couldn't see each other, couldn't know anything that he got burnt on the back of his neck. Came out of the clouds and the paramedics grabbed him, ripped his

J. CURRAN

coat off. They hosed him down and took him straight uptown, I guess Columbia Presbyterian, whatever it was, all the way uptown.

But I ran directly north. A lot of guys ran west. A lot of guys that never operated down there, whatever, I had a phone company job before the Fire Department that my office was down over in that area. So I knew -- I would rather run up the West Side Highway where there were no interruptions, pavement, as far as I could run, then jump over a middle island. Then who knows what you are going to run into.

Q. Right.

A. But I know a lot of guys ran west. A friend of mine in 207 Engine did that. He got picked up, he rode the cloud like 70 feet, till he hit a chain link fence.

Q. No kidding.

A. All he saw was a square. We was -- what if this didn't turn out to be a fence.

Q. Is he all right?

A. He broke his thumb. He actually, when tower one -- when tower two went down, and got buried in rubble and him and a guy dug themselves out and then tower one came down on him and tossed him again. So he

J. CURRAN

is still a little out there.

Q. He's a lucky guy.

A. Very lucky, lucky twice over.

Q. Twice over, right.

A. That's basically -- everything besides that is all jumbled up who I saw. The only reason I remember 28 Engine is because I think it was every half landing, the companies would scream 28, I'm here. I'm here, all right, all right. Then you got to the next floor, 28, there was a guy Wade, I think his name is, from 33, that was with us the whole way down. Just a whole mix up of all different companies.

Q. When you got back to the fire house you never went back that day? What time did you get back to the fire house?

A. Back to the fire house, I'm guessing, probably 11:30 in the morning. Maybe 11:30, 12 o'clock.

Q. The next morning?

A. That afternoon. The building collapsed at --

Q. 9:30, 10, 10 o'clock?

A. We were down there for a couple of more hours, down there until about 12, 12:30, came back and then we went back down that night. I didn't go home

J. CURRAN

until Thursday morning.

Q. Thursday morning.

A. We would do like 6 hours down there and then we would man the rig for whatever hours. I was pretty much down there in the area for three days. I don't know how many loads of laundry I did because everything would be itching like crazy every time you came back. All that is like a whole blur to me, because afterwards I was in shock. I don't know if I was in shock or couldn't believe that I lived or not or what. I just know we dug for like 6 hours a day and manned the rig for the other hours.

Q. Did you find any firemen when you were digging?

A. No, we were always sent to spots where we never found anyone. Although that spot right after we left is when they got deep enough, they wound up finding one or two guys here and there. Then they brought in the ABC platoon thing. I just did the 24 on, 24 off [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Lieutenant Donahue got me detailed to 18 Engine. They took the squad out of service. I worked there for by a week, at 20 truck's quarters. No more fire duty. Then after that, I went

J. CURRAN

back to regular chart.

Q. Is that it?

A. Yes, that's basically it.

BATTALION CHIEF MALKIN: It's 12:55 hours.

This concludes the interview, I thank Firefighter
Curran for the interview. That's the end.

File No. 9110413

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TIERNACH CASSIDY

Interview Date: December 30, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is 12/30/01. The time is 1136 hours, and this is Battalion Chief Malkin, Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Third Grade Tiernach Cassidy, Engine 3. We're in the quarters of Engine 3. The interview concerns the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Okay. You can start anyplace where you were when you got the run.

A. At the time on 9/11, I was on light duty at the 1st Division. I was right over at 20 Truck and Squad 18's quarters on Lafayette between Spring and Prince. I arrived there for light duty 8:00 in the morning.

I go out on the top of the building for my morning cigarette. Usually I'm the only person out there smoking. I think by the time I got there it was maybe 8:30. The first plane had already hit. You see plainly from the roof of the 1st Division the towers.

Everybody was on the roof. The shock and dismay and fear in everybody's eyes, the firemen, everybody that was there that didn't go

down there that was on light duty with me because they didn't do what they call the total recall at that point.

Of course we're all asked, "Let's go, go." They're like, it went to a fifth alarm. We've got enough guys down there. Don't worry about it. It's taken care of. Still I was in shock. I was standing there, standing on the roof, not watching the TV, standing on the roof watching.

We don't actually see the second plane hit, but we see the impact. We were on of course the north side, so we saw the huge explosion engulf the whole top of that building. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

When I could talk after that, I said, "Now we're going. You know, let's go."

Q. Sure.

A. The guy in charge of the guys on light duty that day said, "I know. You guys still aren't going. You have to wait. You're not going. You have to wait until the call is made, until they say we can go." He's calling to see if we can, because we all want to go.

Then we start going downstairs. 20 and 18 left when the first plane hit. So we go downstairs. We go down the back stairs of the 1st Division, and we set into 20-18 and we start grabbing, putting gear together, because we were going to go anywhere.

Then the first tower came down. Then the guy that was in charge of us came running down the stairs. He's like, "Everybody's going who wants to go."

47 Truck was relocated to 20. Whether they were relocated there or just going down to pick up gear, I don't know. They were stocking their rig with cylinders and tools, radios, anything they could get their hands on.

Myself and ten other members that were there on light duty, we all jumped on top of 47 Truck, and we headed down Broadway. This is now after the first tower had collapsed. We're going down Broadway, and people were already flocking up Broadway, up Lafayette, everywhere uptown.

On the way down people were blessing themselves as we were going down. I'm standing on top of the rig between the bucket and the cab,

between the ladder and the cab. People were blessing themselves in this gloominess of going down. It was like out of a movie. I couldn't believe what was going on.

But we get down there, and all the guys that we had on the top of the rig -- we had ten guys and whatever other guys came in from 18 and 20. We couldn't see once we got past City Hall a block ahead of yourself. You could see one block at a time and that's it from that first dust cloud and the smoke and whatever.

We stopped when we get to Fulton Street just to get our bearings, and everybody on the back -- as I'm sitting by the cab, so everybody by the bucket, they all jump off. I think it was five guys, because we said we wanted to make sure we had a team of five guys. So I guess the first team jumped off the back on Fulton, and then the truck took off again.

We leave the truck on the Broadway side of One Liberty Plaza between Cortlandt Street and Liberty. We all get off the rig, the members of 47 and the members I was with from light duty, and we start packing stokes baskets with spare

cylinders, tools, whatever we could carry.

Civilians are running up to us saying they can't breathe, so we're giving them hits of the cylinders, of the masks -- we had cylinders, but we didn't all have masks. I didn't have a mask yet.

We start walking down Cortlandt Street from Broadway, going west, and we're carrying the stokes basket, myself and the team I was with, the other four guys. We started hearing the pancaking of the north tower now.

I looked at the officer I was with. We both looked at each other like what's that? Not thinking the second one would be coming down.

Q. What did it sound like?

A. It sounded like a plane just getting ready to land, just getting closer, coming in; a bowling ball getting closer when it's ready to hit that sweet spot, you know. But it didn't take us long to realize what it was. We didn't look up. We just ran back to the rig, thinking that would be safety or just away, anyway.

So we ran back up Cortlandt towards Broadway, and the other guys, I'm not sure where

they all dove. I opened up the door to 47 Truck and stuck to the side of the rig and pulled my helmet down over my ears.

I remember right across the street from one Liberty the other building had a monument or something. It was a big square with a hole in it. It's been sitting there forever. I just remember watching that and thinking this is it.

Whatever debris is hitting me in the head or hitting the truck and falling next to me, I'm still looking at this monument. Then the monument slowly disappears from the cloud it was covered in, that we were all covered in.

However long it took, I don't know. As soon as debris stopped floating on us, we dusted ourselves off, we went back to the stokes basket, found it, picked it up, and continued down Cortlandt.

Then halfway down Cortlandt before we got down to Church Street, we heard a mayday being given already in one of the buildings off to the right, which is the East River Savings bank. There was a member in there. I'm not sure what company, where he's from, but he had a

broken leg. The other three members needed to take him out.

So it was just myself and the officer now left with the stokes basket, and we continued down. While those three other members assisted this firefighter, the officer and myself went to the corner of Liberty and Church. It was on the corner of 10 and 10.

We dropped the stokes basket there. I used to live down on Maiden Lane years ago, which is a block and a half from the World Trade Center. So I knew the area really well. I was telling this to the officer on the way down, "I know this area."

So we got down to Church and Liberty, and he asked me, "Which way should we go?" And I didn't know. We couldn't walk through 10 and 10. The street was at least three stories high of debris covering 10 and 10. I think we walked down Cedar, down Greenwich, down Albany, until we got down to the West Side Highway, West Street.

We got to West Street. They had some sort of command structure set. We saw some white helmets. At first we started asking, "What are

we doing? What are we doing?" Nobody really had a specific answer.

At that point we just needed more tools. So we saw there was an ESU vehicle, emergency services unit, police vehicle, squad cars, whatever, and we tried to get into those to get some more live-saving ropes, utility ropes, anything we thought we could use, a Halligan maul, what we needed.

Then I found a mask, so I masked up, cylinder. I had a life-saving rope, utility rope, Halligan. The officer had -- no, I had the maul, he had the Halligan, he had his mask. Then we walked down West Street I think right -- no, actually we went further down than West. We went all the way down Albany. We went past West down to Liberty between the -- right before you get to that -- it's like another atrium almost set up. It's by the Gateway Plaza area.

We hung a right up Liberty Street from there, and we entered between the Marriott -- I'm sorry. Yeah, between the Vista International and Two World Trade Center. Here is where we entered the site.

I couldn't tell what rigs were on fire while we're walking by them. We had hose lines stretched. We helped stretch a line quickly just to get it over debris. Then we continued. We didn't know what -- we didn't know where to start looking. We could have started looking where we were standing, but we wanted to get in, get in, get in.

I remember the World Financial Center, Two and three World Financial Center, being at my back, because it was the biggest buildings -- I only knew what was north, south, east and west. That's as much as I could tell from living down on Maiden Lane for four years. I could only tell which way was north, south, east and west. So every time the officer asked me, "Cassidy, where are we?" I looked around and see Two World Financial Center there. I would be like, "That's west, that's north," and that's all I could tell him.

When we got to pretty much between one and two, I would assume -- because once you're in there at that time, you had no clue.

Q. It's like a mountain at this point;

right?

A. Yeah.

Q. Both buildings are down, you're on top of a mountain?

A. Correct, correct. We didn't know exactly how high we were up. Some of the voids that we saw, of course we went -- the officer, he was all gung ho. I was sticking with him.

I went for the life-saving rope, give him one end, he would tie himself off, and I would be up top and tie it to whatever substantial object I could. He would go give a quick search just to see -- because there were still maydays being given all over.

Q. Did you guys have a radio?

A. He had a radio. He had a radio which he took.

Q. From 20 Truck?

A. From 20 Truck.

I don't know how long we were walking around. It was about two hours prior to building seven coming down until we finally found somebody. We were walking around for at least three hours.

Finally we find this huge hole. I'm standing on the top of this huge girder. Nothing was moving on this girder, the size of these things. So I'm standing on top of the girder. At this point now we couldn't carry all our tools anymore. It was like climbing a mountain, with an extra hundred pounds on you, you just can't do it.

I started leaving tools left and right. I was leaving the Halligan. I just held onto the life-saving rope, which it's a good thing I did, because when I got to the top of the girder he said he's going to go down. So I unfurled the life-saving rope again, and he goes down in this hole and he comes up -- it wasn't a hole; it was a big gaping gash. It was about 35 feet down, 30-40 feet.

So he goes down, and he comes up the other side and he scales this other I beam to get up. He gets to the top of it, and I'm almost out of rope. So he says there's another gap, another void, over here. He said, "I'm going to be out of sight for a couple seconds." I was like all right. I didn't have a radio now. I couldn't

even hear him, how far he was away.

So I tie off, and I go down to the bottom of the hole, and I started coming up. He said he found him. It was the guys from 36, that Port Authority cop, three civilians and a friend of mine, Mickey Cross.

Q. I know him well.

A. Yeah.

So the Port Authority cop comes out first. There was a chief there, two chiefs, I think. I don't even remember.

Q. These guys were down in the hole?
Where were these guys, all these guys?

A. The fourth floor of the north tower when it came down.

Q. And they were in this hole where he was looking around? What condition were they in?

A. The other hole was 60 feet deep. How the tower came down, it came down on itself. So it was just pummeled into the ground. How they survived, I have no idea. I couldn't believe it.

I mean, I thought that day we were going to find hundreds and thousands of people walking out. You know, we'd just take them out.

But those 10 or 11 we found right there, that was it for that day.

Q. What were they in? Why were they waiting to be rescued? Were they in a place where you had to dig them out?

A. They needed a life-saving rope to come down and get them. They were down that far. There was no -- they didn't know which way was up, which way was down. 110 stories comes down on your head and you're 60 feet down --

Q. Were they dazed?

A. Oh, yeah.

Q. What kind of physical condition?

A. They are --

Q. So they needed assistance to get out of there?

A. Definitely, definitely. If you talk to Mickey -- the Port Authority cop comes out first. The life-saving rope is taut now. I'm like, "Come on. This way. This way." I'm just like directing traffic, you know. I get up to the top of the girder again, and now it's a tough climb to get to the girder.

So I use my body like a bridge. He

gets up on my leg and then my shoulder and he's up on the girder. He lies there on top of the girder, and he gives me the biggest hug and he starts crying. For me it was like, "All right, no time for sentiment. You've got to get going. You walk that way."

At this point now the officer I was with was giving calls for the stokes basket because the civilians that were down there were not walking out. So the guys -- I forget whatever squads, rescues, whoever was showing up, I see them off in the distance. They're like, "Who asked for the stokes?" I was waving, "Over here."

I pointed to the Port Authority cop. "See those guys? Walk that way out, the way they're coming in." He's like, "All right." He walks out under his own power. Everybody that got out -- the next guy that came out, I forget -- I don't know who the chief was, but he had brass, white shirt. Nicks and scratches, bruises, you know. Mentally not with it. Totally dazed.

Q. Mickey Cross is okay?

A. Mickey was the third guy to come out. At first I didn't see him when he was coming down the pile. He slid down the I beam, you know. I grabbed his hand when he was coming up. He looks up, and all he has is a cut on the top of his nose, on the bridge of his nose.

I said, "Hey, Mickey." He just looked at me. He didn't remember who I was. He said, "Which way out? Which way out?" That's what he said. I just pointed. You could still see the Port Authority cop and the chief walking for a while. I just pointed to them and "Follow them." So he walked to them.

Then the guys from 36 came out next, 36 Truck. Then we started running civilians out. Then the stokes came in. At this point I was wearing Squad 18's gear, so I guess these guys from rescue now and squads that were there, it was their operation, squads and rescue's work. I don't know. I had this gear on, "Come on," blah-blah-blah. So maybe I kept in the action a little longer.

So we got all the civilians out in stokes. We brought in ladders to help, because

the I beam that was going up. So it was some makeshift way to make it a bit easier to walk around.

Then, like I said, building seven was in eminent collapse. They blew the horns. They said everyone clear the area until we got that last civilian out. We tried to give another quick search while we could, but then they wouldn't let us stay anymore.

So we cleared the area. Our staging area at that point was on Vesey. It was down on Vesey, Vesey off West. We were probably a block up West on North End and Vesey, because I remember Marine 1 was docked right up here, and they were pumping water. They were pumping lines of water.

Q. Where did you find the hole where you were digging for Mickey Cross and all these people? Whereabouts was that in the site? Tower one?

A. That was tower one but it was --

Q. Somewhere in the pile?

A. -- the southeast end of tower one, because it was like I was dead center. As I

said, I remember looking back and seeing Two World Financial Center behind me.

Then we sat on Vesey, and doctors were coming around. My eyes were just -- everybody's eyes that was in that dust cloud were killing me. So the doctor looked at me and was like, you need an eye wash. I was, yes. They washed my eyes a couple of times.

We were making sure we had all our members. I'm not sure if it was at that point when I ran into my company. I think it is. Yeah. First I was just sitting by myself. Then I first saw somebody here, Angel Rivera. I saw him; he saw me. He came over and gave me a big hug, and he started crying. I didn't know any -- because we lost five guys. He was with them. He was in the Marriott Hotel with them. He took out two civilians. I don't want to be telling someone else's story, if you want to talk to him.

He was senior guy on the truck, and I think he had the irons. He had the civilian with him. So when they heard another mayday on a higher floor in the Marriott, they were like, "We're going for the mayday." He was going to go

with them, but they were like, "No, you have a civilian. Get the civilian out." He didn't want to, but he did. That was the last time he saw them. So he wasn't in good shape.

So yeah, then we just stayed on Vesey until building seven came down. There was nothing we could do. The flames were coming out of every window of that building from the explosion of the south tower. So then building seven down. When that started coming down, you heard that pancaking sound again.

Everyone jumped up and starts running west towards the water. I hear somebody yell, "Run and don't stop running." It wasn't half as high. It was only 47, 52.

Q. 40 stories, yeah, 47 stories.

A. Like that's nothing, 47 stories coming down; right? But the dust cloud didn't go as far west. I guess it blew whatever part north and south. But it came down as far as West Street. Nobody was injured with that.

So that was it. As soon as seven came down, we were going back in. I got together with my company, Engine 3, and Lieutenant Walsh was

working. We went to work. Where did we go? I'm not even sure where we went after that. I think we just went to the building seven area, checking around there.

I was there till about 10:30 that night, 11:00. I got back to the firehouse here at 12 midnight. I know that. My captain was surprised to see me, because I was on light duty. Maybe he wasn't surprised; I don't know. But I came walking in the door with everybody else in the companies. Some rescue company from Long Island or something or upstate dropped us off. He saw me drag myself in. "Hey, Knickknack, how ya doing?"

That was 9/11 for me.

Q. I wrote down one question here. When you were walking down Vesey Street when you first got there and three of the guys that were with you went in to help a fireman with a broken leg --

A. Correct.

Q. -- how did you know he was in there? Did he call to you verbally? On the radio? What?

A. Another civilian came running up to us saying there's a fireman hurt in here.

Q. Right.

A. We all went in at first. The two guys, one went to either side of him. He was laying down on the floor. He still had all his bunker gear on and everything, but he couldn't walk on his leg. I'm assuming it was broken.

Q. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

A. The other two guys picked him up, and the third guy just gets behind him. That was it. They were looking for another stokes to put him in. We had all our tools in this one. There was a bus up the corner of Broadway somewhere, an ambulance, but that wasn't going anywhere. That was buried. We were able to grab the stokes from it. They grabbed the stokes, put him in that and then they carried him away.

Not to say we weren't waiting, but we weren't. We had other things on our minds.

Q. Why was building seven on fire? Was that flaming debris from tower two --

A. From tower two.

Q. -- that fell onto that building and lit

it on fire?

A. Correct.

Q. Because it really got going, that building seven. I saw it late in the day, and like the first seven floors were on fire. It looked like heavy fire on seven floors.

A. It was fully engulfed. That whole building -- there were pieces of tower two in building seven and the corners of the building missing and whatnot. But just looking up at it from ground level, however many stories it was, 40-some-odd, you could see the flames going straight through from one side of the building to the other. That's an entire block.

Q. I wonder what was burning in there. What do you think was burning? It's an office building. There's not a lot of wood in there.

A. You figure, that jet fuel, that explosion that hit, everything just came out. Remember that explosion? It was massive, that fireball. That jet fuel just --

Q. It was jet fuel, yeah. That must have been where it landed. That's probably where a lot of the jet fuel went.

A. A 25,000 gallon tank I think it had?

Q. It had to go somewhere.

All right. Is that about it?

A. Yeah.

Q. That's good.

CHIEF MALKIN: It's 1203 hours. I
thank Fireman Cassidy for this interview.
There was nobody else in the room during
this interview. This concludes the
interview.

File No. 9110414

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DEREK BROGAN

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: Today's date is December 28, 2001. The time is 6:55 p.m., and this is Lieutenant Joseph Chiafari of the safety command of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with Derek Brogan, firefighter of Engine 5 of the New York City Fire Department, regarding the events of September 11th.

Q. Derek, I'll ask you to state your name, unit and tell us what took place on that day.

A. My name is Derek Brogan, assigned to Engine 5.

We went out of the box about 8:30, at Irving and 19th Street. Food on the stove. As we were taken up from the box, we were backing out of 19th Street, and we heard a plane go over our heads. So me and the backup man, Jimmy Andruzzi, looked at each other. We realized it was low. We actually mentioned it to each other. We continued backing out into the street. Just a minute later our officer told us that a plane had hit the Trade Center and that we were going on the second alarm.

As we were going there, we heard the

10-60 transmitted. Going down 14th Street, we started looking down the avenues and saw a lot of fire down there. We mentioned to each other that we had to stay together and this was going to be probably the biggest disaster we've ever seen.

So we continued down to West Street and made a left turn, getting a better look at the tower. We knew that we had to go there and try and help the people out.

We parked by the Verizon building. All the members got off the rig. We all grabbed extra cylinders. Manny Delvalle was with us. He had the door position. He didn't take a roll-up; the chauffeur took a roll-up. He figured he was just going to park the rig on a hydrant and took off for the building.

We got in the lobby. I believe either the lieutenant or Captain Atlas from 10 Engine came up to us when we got in the lobby and said that we were to team up together, 10 Engine and 5 Engine. We thought that was strange. We thought they would be up there already.

Just as everyone was starting to walk towards the center stair, which was the only

stair we thought led up to the upper floors, we heard the next plane hit the other building. We looked out the windows at the reflection on the Financial Center and saw the fire plume coming down.

Then we really didn't know what we were up against. We were kind of hoping that it was an accident at the time for the first tower. But once the other building got hit, we realized that it wasn't an accident anymore.

We started marching up the stairs. I'm not positive about what floors it was, but we took a break on like 10 for a few minutes. All the people were coming down, they were very calm. They would yell from a couple floors up that there was a burn victim coming down, and everyone plastered themselves up against the wall and the burn victim would come down. It was amazing to see that they were actually smiling that they were almost down the stairs.

Maybe about the 13th floor I started having chest pains. I remember now what it was from. I had crossed my extra cylinder over from one side to the other side. I felt a tear go

across, but in the chaos of what was happening I never put two and two together.

So we stopped for a few minutes, got some water. I felt better. I started walking back up the stairs, got to 19, and I had chest pains again. So we stopped. The lieutenant was going to leave me there with a couple of other guys to go back down. But I started feeling better, and we went up again, to the 23rd floor.

There the chest pain was getting very irritating. They called mayday for somebody to come up and give us oxygen, because there was myself and two guys from 9 Truck there. The guy from 9 Truck was yelling that he couldn't feel his arms.

So the Port Authority ESU cops came up. They gave us some oxygen. There was an FBI guy I think on that floor or one of the floors just below it as we were walking up. He told us the Pentagon got hit and the other tower got hit. He misinformed us by telling us that NYU Hospital got hit. I remember him saying that to me. And he said, "We still have four planes in the air, and we don't know where they are."

We were in an outer office on the 23rd floor on the southeast corner, which I guess faces tower two. Then we felt the rumble. You just heard this noise that sounded like the subway train going by but magnified by a thousand.

When we heard that noise, we just all got up. We didn't bother to look out the window. We just made an exit out of that room. We got to 9 Truck. I remember them yelling that we had to close the doors behind us. We closed the doors behind us, and I went to go back in the stairwell and there wasn't any room in the stairwell. It was loaded with people.

So myself and a guy named Schroder from 10 Engine went down the hallway and found a closet, and we darted into the closet. We were in there maybe five to ten seconds. Then we heard a knock on the door. We opened the door. At that time the lights went out and the whole place just was -- you couldn't see anything. Dust, smoke, whatever it was.

Outside was a Port Authority cop. We dragged him in with us. We couldn't get him

all the way in the room because he was laying on the floor and his leg was hanging outside of the doorway. This wind came down the hallway and blew the doors open that were in that office that we were in. I remember me yelling that his ankle was getting crushed outside the door.

That subsided after about 20, 30 seconds. The rumbling was still there, but the wind was gone. We opened the door. We yelled outside where 5 Engine was, because you couldn't see anything. They said they were here. They just kept on yelling. We found them in the stairwell.

We went down with a number of civilians, maybe like nine or ten civilians and maybe four Port Authority cops, it seemed. We were all carrying people and sharing our masks with them.

As we got back in the stairwell, we didn't know whether we were going up or going down. But the rumbling was so intense that we didn't really know what had happened. We just assumed that our building had been hit by another plane.

The officer just looked at all of us and said, "That's it. We're getting out of here. We're done. We're of no use to anybody here. We've got to get these people out."

So we started going down the stairs. It was a real slow haul down the stairs. We got to the fourth floor, and the stairwell was filled with rubble. We couldn't go down that stairway anymore. So we went out into the hallway through the fourth floor, and the officer again yelled that we have to look for windows. Maybe we could blow out a window and just get fresh air from a window, whatever it was that was in his mind.

We went down the hallway, couldn't find the windows. Then we heard him yelling, "Anyone in the stairwell, go to the lobby." We followed his voice back to the stairwell, went down the four floors, and we had lost another member from Engine 5. We had lost Gerard Gorman.

We had lost Manny Delvalle on the way up the stairs. We saw him on maybe the first or second floor, and then when we stopped on ten, we posted a guy at the door and he just never passed us. But he was carrying an oxygen bottle.

Instead of carrying a roll-up, he had the EMS oxygen bottle.

Our thoughts are that he might have stopped to help one of the civilians that came down that was burned. That's kind of what we hoped he had done, because that would probably have put him back in the street.

We had lost Gorman, so we waited down at the lobby. We came down the center stair and were waiting in the lobby, yelling up the stairs for him to come down. He wasn't coming down the stairs, and there wasn't anybody else coming down the stairs. Our officer told us that he saw Lieutenant Donnelly on the down the stairs. He's from 3 Truck. But I don't remember seeing him even, he vividly remembers seeing him and trying to make him come with us.

We waited in the lobby probably about a minute, and then the officer just told us that we have to cut our losses and try to find our way out, because you couldn't see anything. There was gas leaking all over the place. The marble was falling on top of us.

So we proceeded to go to West Street,

pretty much the same place we came in. There was no windows in the lobby when we showed up, and there was no windows in the lobby when we were leaving.

We went to step outside the window, and we caught a figure. I don't know -- I remember his face, but I don't remember what he was wearing, whether he was a fireman or a cop or a civilian. He was probably about 50 yards away from us.

He just started yelling, "Come on." He was looking up at the building and waving his hand at us. So we went to walk outside the window. Just as we stepped out, he started saying, "Stop, stop, stop." That's when all the bodies -- I don't know how many bodies, but a bunch of bodies came down at that specific time. It looked like it was raining bodies.

After about ten seconds, he just started screaming, "Now you've got to run." We ran and ran and ran and we got onto West Street, and we started walking, looking for the rig. I couldn't find the rig, which was only parked a block up.

We looked back at the building, and the dust had already settled from tower two falling down, but we were blocked from the view. We didn't know what had happened. So we look at our tower and just assumed it was still standing. So we didn't know whether to go back in or not.

The guy just started screaming at us again, "It's coming down. It's coming down." We just took off. We couldn't find the rig. Me and Jimmy Andruzzi got split up. I went up and I tried to jump on the back of an ambulance that was going north up West Street, but it only went ten feet and stopped in traffic. So I got off of that.

I started running up West Street. I still had my mask on and looking back at the cloud that was coming behind us. A clear burst of air came right before the dust cloud came and blew my mask off my shoulders. I just kept on running.

I found a girl on West Street talking on a cell phone like nothing had happened. I just grabbed her under the arm and went up to Stuyvesant High School and sat down there.

That's pretty much where the dust cloud finished.

From there I saw a guy from Cabrini that works in the Cabrini ambulances that is familiar with us because we went with him all the time. He just said, "What's the matter with you?" I said, "I have chest pains." He put me in the ambulance. We went to Cabrini. They did an EKG. Everything was fine. They told me it was a pulled muscle under my chest.

They gave me my -- well, first on 19th Street they decontaminated me with a garden hose, stripped all my clothes off in the middle of 19th Street. After they did the EKG, they just gave my clothes back and sent me back to the firehouse.

I came back, called the division to tell them that I was back here, and they sent me around to all the neighboring hospitals around here to start writing up lists of who was in the hospital, who was admitted, who was treated, who was released.

That's basically all there is about it that I remember.

Q. Good. What was the highest floor you

had gone up to?

A. 23.

Q. 23. Do you recall how long it took you to get up there in terms of time? Can you estimate from the time you left the lobby to how long to get up there?

A. I never really looked at the time line in the face of that. We were in the lobby when the second plane hit, and we were on the 23rd floor when the other building collapsed. Was that an hour? I'm not positive.

Q. It was close to an hour.

A. Yeah. It was a very hard walk up.

Q. Actually when you got to the 23rd floor, you actually went out on the floor itself.

A. Right. That's where we left to get some relief from going up the stairwell. That's when the chest pains set in, and that's when they called a mayday. They came up within three minutes. They gave me oxygen. Within two minutes of giving me oxygen is when the other building fell.

Q. When the other building fell, then, it was the dust and debris from the other building

that wound up on your floor?

A. Yeah.

Q. Had the windows, I guess, blown?

A. There were no safety lights. Nothing went on.

Q. It was total darkness now up there?

A. Total darkness, yeah. We just happened to be with two guys from 9 Truck which we know. They're right down the street from us. So we teamed up with them for a little bit, and they went a separate way and went down a rear staircase, and we went down the staircase that we're familiar with. We went down that one and got to the fourth floor.

Q. You've since seen those two guys from 9 Truck?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you hear anything unusual on the radio or you weren't wearing a radio that day? You had the nozzle position; correct?

A. Yes. I didn't have a radio. I didn't hear any maydays for anyone to come out. I do remember a guy from 10 Engine trying to find his officer. I don't know if he was the control man

or backup man or whoever had the radio over there.

I remember the officer saying that he was on the 43rd floor to come on up, and they were coming up with us. I guess it might be a little easier going up without a roll-up, so he was making good headway on the stairs.

The staircase we were in, we were only taking two or three steps and stopping, two or three more steps and stopping. As you got higher up, maybe for the first nine or ten floors, you were sailing right up the stairs. But then as you got more into the heart of the building I guess where more of the population was, it was harder to get up the stairs.

Q. I assume there were people coming down the stairs at the same time you were going up?

A. There were a lot of people coming down the stairs. It never ceased.

Q. Do you remember what stairway designation it was, by chance?

A. I believe it was C, which was the center of the building that we went up. We might have went up that staircase to about 14 or 15.

Then we just couldn't make it up that stairway anymore, and we left to I think B, which would be on the southeast corner and went up that stair. That's where we got up to the 19th floor first and then the 23rd floor after that.

Q. So the original staircase you did take, that was the one that was blocked around the fourth floor level?

A. No. From what I believe, there's only one staircase that goes to the lobby of that building. The other staircases go to the sky lobby or the promenade or whatever that level is called. We went right up the center staircase in the core of the building where the elevators were, and we went right up there.

When we were coming back down, we were coming back down the southeast staircase, which I think was B. I'm not positive it was B. I guess the rubble had come up and gone through the windows of the lobby and then to the staircase and just knocked it out. That was the rubble that was blocking our path to get down.

Which actually the guy that they were calling for, Gerard Gorman, found his way down

that staircase with a couple guys from 20 Truck. I guess it wasn't as cluttered as we thought. We just had the lead guy in front of us yelled back there's no more stairs, they're all gone.

So in the darkness we believed everything we heard. I was sharing my mask by putting it on people's faces. Gerard Gorman was sharing his mask by purging it. So maybe with that loud hissing noise going on, he didn't hear that we were getting off at the fourth floor.

That's the only thing I can imagine, that we were all close together, but we couldn't see anything. You would have to really get down like eight, nine inches from the floor just to see the glow-in-the-dark strip that was on the staircase to find out where the last stair was on the landing so you could make the turn.

Q. Any people you had seen prior to going up the stairs in the lobby that you know are not around today or any people you saw on the upper floors that did not make it through this?

A. We didn't see 33 Engine, which we thought we would see. We didn't see any familiar faces, no familiar faces. We teamed up with 10

Engine, and that's who we stuck with all the way up.

I remember asking a number of people while we were going up, the civilians that were coming down, what floors they were coming from, how high up they were. I don't remember hearing anybody from like above the 60th floor.

We had the mind-set that we were going to the 80th floor for some reason. I guess I just overheard that in the lobby, that we were going to 80. In hindsight, it was higher than 80, tower one. But I remember on the way up we were counting floors. We stopped on a certain floor like 10, we've got 70 more to go; 20, we've got 60 more to go.

I really don't know what we would have done when we got up there, but we were trying to get up there. We even started dropping our stuff to see if we could have the companies that were further up, leave their stuff and come back down. We would just go without our rollups.

I was even thinking we would switch bunker gear with them, trying with what company you have to go as far as you can, go with a

chain. But I really don't know if that would have been (inaudible).

When we were a couple blocks away from the building, we heard the noise coming down. It was just like dominos only it was probably going faster and faster and faster. Then you just couldn't see anything.

Q. This is the second collapse?

A. This is the second collapse.

Q. Do you remember your exact positioning, where exactly it was when you started to run at that point?

A. We were just beyond the Verizon building, which I think the Verizon building is the north side of Vesey Street.

Q. North side of Vesey, yes.

A. So we were just a block beyond that.

Q. So actually on West Street, though?

A. On West Street. Luckily that's the way we responded, so that's the way we started going to leave. Had we come in from the south side, we would have tried to go south and wouldn't have been able to go south. I don't remember seeing the other building laying in the street as we

came out, but I don't remember the giant dust cloud from the other building either.

I saw that guy that was 50 yards away that was waving us out of the building. When tower one fell down, I don't think we would have been able to see 50 yards with the dust cloud that came from that.

I only remember seeing the two guys from 9 Truck. Other guys they said they remember hearing 3 Truck giving maydays, having gotten a radio at that point. We were just preoccupied with trying to carry some people and hopefully trying to find our way out.

There were a number of times we didn't think we were going to make it out. You thought when we got off the 23rd floor, that was it, you were clear.

The chest pains, I thought it was a heart attack. I had never had any heart attack before, so you really don't know what it's supposed to feel like. But it didn't feel good.

When the fourth floor was blocked, I thought that our luck had run out there. When we got to the lobby, I thought our luck had run out

there. Then when the bodies came down when we were leaving the building, I certainly thought that was our last chance.

I would estimate we were out of the building maybe two minutes before it fell down. So in that little time line, I think it took us between 20 and 25 minutes to come down from the 23rd floor, which is a long time. It seems like two minutes, but it was a long time.

Q. Sure.

Any recollection of any talk of the elevators before you went up the stairs? You were in the stairwell, of course, but any talk of the elevators?

A. Someone did mention in the lobby about the elevators, but it was quickly dispelled. The elevators aren't working. The elevators aren't working.

I do remember seeing Joe Malone from Battalion 6 as we were walking in the battalion rig was parked on the east side of West Street by the center divider in the street. He waved to us and told us to be careful upstairs. He's gone now.

I don't remember seeing Chief Williamson that was with him, but I remember seeing Joe standing in the street at the back of the rig, waving to us.

Until the second plane hit, we really thought it was an accident. We didn't put together it was the clearest day, one of the clearest days I've ever had. We didn't put together that that plane went over our head until when we actually were told that another plane had hit.

I didn't know until I got to Cabrini Hospital that another plane had hit the other building, that it was actually a plane. When they were decontaminating me, I thought maybe it was something a little more sinister, you know, because they wouldn't tell me anything. They just told me --

Q. Of course. You go by sounds or what you hear. It's like not knowing exactly what's going on.

A. They were just telling me that I was exposed, and I didn't know what I was exposed to. I was just hopeful. When I heard it was another

plane, I was actually kind of relieved that that's all it was.

I do remember questioning myself, transferring from Staten Island to Manhattan.

Q. A lot different, huh? A high-rise building as opposed to a two- or three-story building.

A. I transferred here.

Q. Anything else of importance that you feel is necessary to add to this interview?

A. The evacuation of the people seemed pretty orderly coming out. I don't know if I would have been that orderly if I was running out of the building and I had the recollection of what happened in '93. They were definitely organized. Nobody was pushing, shoving.

There was no emergency lights. There was no intercom system in the building that I remember hearing. If you read the papers, they said that they were announcing to get out of the building. I don't remember hearing any intercom system remarking that the other tower got hit or they were evacuating tower one. None of that. None of the emergency lights worked.

They should have had more staircases going to the lobby, because when you come out at that promenade level and you have to walk outside in between the buildings, and there was no one between the buildings.

That's about it. I really don't recall much else. I really didn't recall much when I came out of there. It's just bullshit sessions that we had in the basement that triggered your mind to remember what happened. Just the guys talking to each other was a great asset to try and piece this together and figure out that we were just as much victims as everybody that was in the building. We didn't have a chance to do anything. We didn't have a chance to put the fire out, which was really all we were trying to do.

Q. That's all we can.

A. I don't recall anything else.

Q. That's all. It's what you remember, basically, on that fateful day.

A. Yeah.

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: So the time is now 7:18, and this concludes the interview

that we have this evening with Firefighter
Brogan.

File No. 9110415

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RONALD CIFU

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: Today's date is December 28, 2001. The time is 5:05 in the afternoon. This is Lieutenant Joseph Chiafari of the Safety Command, and I am here today conducting the interview with Firefighter Ronnie Cifu of Engine Company 16 regarding the events of September the 11th, 2001.

Q. Ronnie, state your name and your company and describe for us what had taken place on September the 11th.

A. My name is Ronald Cifu of Engine 16.

September 11th I was working the day tour. I got here a little early. About 8:45 the run came in. I heard a plane had hit the World Trade Center, and I kind of figured that we were going to be going. So I got on the rig and turned the radio on. I was listening to it on the radio. Right away the box was transmitted, and they sent us initially.

From here I got on the FDR Drive and headed south from 29th Street. I made good time. Once I got past the Brooklyn Bridge, I was able to get a good look at the towers. There was an

incredible amount of fire, at least ten floors as far as I could see.

From there I was debating on which route to go. I got down to Battery Park, and I decided not to go through the tunnel, underneath the battery and out onto West Street. I got off, and I think I went up State Street to Church. I went up Church and made a left turn onto Liberty, but there was too much civilians and traffic on Liberty. So I backed out, and that's when the second plane hit.

I heard an explosion, and the guys got off the rig to back me out. Then the debris started falling. We got hit with a lot of debris on Church and Liberty. I continued north on Church, and I made a left turn on Barclay. I went down Barclay, took a hydrant over there. We all got off the rig.

I walked to the Trade Center through the plaza onto West Street. I was with the members of Engine 16. The officer and the members went into the building, and I started helping the other MVOs supplying water to the building.

We had the north corner of the north tower. There was a Siamese connection there. We had that supplied. There was a Siamese connection on the south corner of the north tower, and we had that supplied. We were relaying water from across the street to one pumper to the Siamese.

Once we had the building supplied with water and all the other chauffeurs were doing pretty okay and everybody was hooked up, I was plotting my next move. My next move, I was thinking about going into the building and down to the basement and maybe starting the fire pumps or checking with the engineers.

That's when the first person jumped. I was on West Street. I backed up a little bit. Then another person jumped. There had to be at least 15 people that just jumped in the amount of like ten minutes. The time was around 9:15, 9:20 at that point.

When I first got there, there were a lot of maydays and urgent messages. One of the messages I heard was we lost an elevator, and then there was a second message that we lost

another elevator.

As the operation continued, there was a lot of debris falling. As the people were jumping, I kept on backing up onto West Street and heading a little north. I was sort of like underneath that north bridge.

As all the debris was falling, I think that's when the south tower started to collapse. I remember a lot of people running, and I looked back and I just thought it was more debris. People were running past me. So I continued to run with them, and I was running north on West Street. I turned around and I saw the dust cloud. Before you know it, that caught up to me and I was engulfed in that.

Then I was crawling on West Street. I was worried I was going to get hit with part of the building or somebody was going to run me over. Sure enough, there was a police car and he was running north with his lights on, and he was crashing into the wall, the divider wall, which he kind of had me pinned up against. And then I jumped up onto the grass, and I started crawling along the grass.

The dust continued. It was completely black. I would say that lasted about 10, 15 minutes. Once that cleared, I kind of went and regrouped with a couple of the other chauffeurs. I got back up on my feet and went back to my rig. I pulled my rig a little closer. I hooked up. We were trying to keep some of the dust down. We had a couple of the stangs going to try to keep some of the dust down.

I wasn't really sure if there was a collapse. I thought it might have been a partial collapse, maybe just the top floors.

As far as water, I'm not sure if we had enough water into the building. We could have used a little bit more. I'm thinking that maybe the plane severed the standpipe system itself.

That was about 15, 20 minutes after all that took place, and another 10 minutes after that -- it was about 30 minutes between buildings -- then the second building came down. I remember seeing the top floor, about five or six floors, pushed out and to the west, and then the whole building came down.

Then it was the same scenario all over

again. I started running up West Street. This time I got behind one of the rigs and just waited for the dust to clear. Most of the dust cleared. Then I got dusted off. I regrouped with a couple of guys.

That was pretty much it for me for the day. I was kind of like knocked out of the kitchen. At that point they pushed everybody north up to Chambers Street to the staging area, and they weren't letting anybody back towards the fire.

I remember seeing companies. I remember seeing rescue, Rescue 1. I remember seeing 3 Truck, Ladder 2. That was the last time I saw them. I remember hearing Ladder 7 on the radio, on the handy talkies. I couldn't get a clear picture as to what they were saying. They just seemed to be checking in with one another. That was the last time I heard Ladder 7, and that was before the collapse.

That's about it.

Q. Do you recall who from Ladder 7 you heard on the radio, the voice?

A. No. I heard the officer maybe the OV,

or the roof. They were all kind of like checking in with one another.

Q. As far as the companies that you said you saw like Ladder 2, Ladder 3, did you see them in the street? Did you see them in a particular part of --

A. I saw Ladder 3 in the plaza between like Barclay and the World Trade plaza. They were just heading in. I saw Ladder 2 heading south on West Street. Rescue 1, I remember seeing them on West Street. That was all before the first collapse.

Q. You mentioned about hooking up to the Siamese on the north side of Vesey Street?

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you recall which apparatus it was hooked into?

A. No. It might have been 1 Engine supplying that. I don't remember which rigs it was. But we had the building covered. We had all the Siamese connected.

Q. Just waiting to be used, if it was ever used.

A. Yeah.

Q. Did you go in the building at all at any point?

A. No, no. I started walking towards the building. I was thinking about going in, checking with the engineers, and something told me that's just not a good idea. I turned around. That's when people started jumping. I just backed off from there.

Q. All right. Anything else you feel of importance that you need to add?

A. I think the standpipe system itself might have been severed, so I don't know if the standpipes were ever used. If they were, I don't think we had a good supply of water. I don't think we had a good supply of water from the hydrants. It seemed like we were getting -- the pressure was just dropping as we used all the hydrants in the area.

The water pressure seemed to be a problem. It was just the more hydrants you were using, the less pressure you were getting and you just couldn't supply.

Even after the collapse when we were starting to relay water to the car fires and

stuff like that, we just couldn't get the water. I think that was a big problem.

Q. Do you recall what you were operating, what pressure you had, what you were drawing from the hydrant from the operating panel?

A. The hydrant pressure was down to like maybe five, ten pounds, and we were losing water. I noticed that at a couple of different locations. Towards the end of the operation, they were relying on the boats supplying water from the river.

Q. This is later on? This is after the collapses had taken place? This is when they were trying to control fires that were taking place around the surrounding area?

A. Right. Even when I went down there a week later, it was the same problem. We just couldn't get any pressure out of the hydrants.

Q. You weren't aware of the pressure of the hydrants before the collapses, though?

A. No, no. I was just stretching lines and making connections between the chauffeurs.

Q. Very good. All right. Anything else?

A. I don't think so.

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: This concludes
now the interview with Firefighter Cifu.
The time is now 5:17.

File No. 9110416

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TIMOTHY MARMION

Interview Date: December 28, 2001

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: The time is now 4:20 in the afternoon. This is an interview with Firefighter Tim Marmion, M-A-R-M-I-O-N, from Engine Company 16 of the New York City Fire Department. I am Lieutenant Joseph Chiafari of the Safety Command conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Okay, Tim, can you state your name and describe for me the events taking place on September 11th, 2001.

A. My name is Tim Marmion from Engine 16. I worked night tour the night before on Monday the 10th. I was scheduled to work the day tour on the 11th.

We got the call at about I guess 10 to 9. We came down to the Trade Center. When I got on the rig, one of the guys told me -- I had been in the rack before that working the night before. We had a pretty rough night, so since I was in the rack, I wouldn't have been aware of anything going on.

The guy told me -- what I heard on the voice alarm was explosion in the Trade Center. When I got on the rig and started down there, a

guy told me a plane had hit. At that time they thought it was a small plane.

We proceeded down the FDR Drive. You could see the Trade Center from there. At that time I realized it was more than a small plane, a bigger aircraft, because you could see the fire and the size of the hole in the side. You knew it was much bigger than the guy thought it was.

We arrived underneath the Trade Center at about 9:00. We went to move the rig. We tried to make a turn. We couldn't make the turn. So we got out and repositioned the rig. As soon as we got back in the rig, that's when the second plane hit. We proceeded around the corner, and I believe we parked on Vesey Street.

We walked around into the lobby where the command center was. There was Commissioner Von Essen, Chief Feehan, I believe Ganci was there, and I'm sure Mykal Judge was there. There was a bunch of guys standing there. Those were the only people I saw in the lobby besides building personnel. There were no firemen in the lobby.

They told us we were with 1 Engine. 1

Engine arrived a few minutes later, and they told us to take three rollups and a standpipe kit up between the two companies so we could piggyback them up there, switching on and off every six floors or so, taking a breath in between. As far as I know, they told us to proceed up as high as possible to see what was going on up there.

We started up. About every six floors or so we would switch on and off with the rollups. There was a steady stream of civilians coming down. There was a steady stream of firemen and a few cops scattered in there going up. It was orderly, both sides.

We got up to the 22nd floor. We used that as a rest area. The officers went to find a command center they had heard about which I think eventually wasn't one of our command centers; it was a Port Authority command center that was on that floor.

At that time is when the other tower fell. We were in the tower by West Street. I believe that's tower number one. So at that time the tower number two collapsed. We were on the 22nd floor. We waited for the officers to get

back and regrouped.

The building shook. The lights went out. There was some discussion about continuing up or to leave the building. I had heard on a radio that somebody else was wearing standing next to me, "Evacuate the building."

We had a brief discussion. I was told that they meant the civilians. I felt at 10:30 they weren't trying to evacuate civilians. The civilians were leaving at a quarter to 9 when the first plane struck. It was a foregone conclusion that they were leaving the building.

At that time when they told people to evacuate -- that was the word I heard, "evacuate" -- they were talking about us, get out. I believe the officer of 1 Engine tried to call down to the lobby just to verify that. Whether or not he got through, I'm not sure. I'm assuming he did, because then he turned around and told us to get down.

We proceeded down. I made sure that all the guys in our company were ahead of me and they were starting out. We proceeded down, it was an orderly evacuation, people leaving the

building at that point. Everybody was leaving at that time. There was very few, if anybody, going up at that point.

Around the 10th or 11th floor was where I saw the large black woman that 6 Truck had encountered. There were at least 10 or 12 firemen ahead of me that had asked the woman if she wanted help down. There was a security guard from the building, a Port Authority cop or someone with plain clothes and with a gun. He was adamant that he had her, he would take care of her.

So we continued on down. The next floor there was a woman on a stretcher that was being carried by a civilian. A couple of fireman, myself included, relieved those people on that stretcher and carried her down the remainder.

I met a couple of the other firemen that were at the bottom of the stairs waiting there for me, and we took the stretcher from there and brought it out to an ambulance.

As far as I know, there was no smoke condition in the lobby at that time. I thought

the command center was still being manned. I don't know if that's true at this point. There were people over there. I assumed it was the same people that I had left earlier, probably an hour, before. That might not be the case. I'm told that Ganci and Feehan and those guys went across the street, actually by that time.

We took the person out. We put her in an ambulance that was parallel with the Trade Center on West Street. We proceeded to walk north on West Street. We were out of the building a couple minutes, less than five, I would think, I was told, and the building started to come down. We ran up West Street.

We regrouped again, got all the guys together. Eventually we dove into one of those buildings that were there to get out of the smoke. You could feel the smoke and the heat from where the building hit the ground. We regrouped and just waited in the staging area.

We wanted to go back. I told them that we had lost our lieutenant. We didn't know where he was. Also our truck wasn't heard from in quite some time, and we wanted to know where they

were. Nobody really had any information at that point.

Pretty much the rest of the day we just searched the perimeter looking for these people. Eventually our officer who had lagged behind somewhat, he told us that he climbed out of the building. He was in that area with 6 Truck and that woman.

He was in that area with several others -- a couple chiefs and other various people. He had climbed out two or three hours later. I actually didn't see him until probably 9 or 10 o'clock that night when he came back to the firehouse. We got back about 8:00.

The rest of the day was just us sitting in a staging area. They told us we couldn't go back in. That's about it.

Q. Okay, Tim. You mentioned the 22nd floor. Do you recall what amount of time it took you to get from the lobby to the 22nd floor?

A. If you could tell me what time that building collapsed.

Q. The other tower collapsed approximately like 5 after 10.

A. So we were on the scene for an hour at that point. It probably took us 45 minutes to get up there, I would think. I would think at about a quarter after 9 we started up. So if that happened a little after 10, I would think 45 minutes.

Q. 45 minutes?

Do you recall what stairway designation that you took up?

A. The stairway probably close to West Street on that side of the building, next to one of the elevator banks. They also told us to stay away from the elevator banks, that they were coming down.

Q. Yeah, they were afraid of them collapsing.

A. I don't remember any of the companies that were up there on the floor with us aside from 1 Engine. The 1 Engine officer, by the way didn't make it out. He perished. I don't know if he lagged behind getting guys down, trying to get as many down as possible. He didn't make it out.

Q. Okay. Very good. Anything else you

want to add that has any importance to yourself?

A. Yeah, I was wondering if they actually had a plan for us, what we were going to do once we got up there to the 50th, 60th floors, if there was any idea whether or not there was any stand pipe in service for us to carry these rollups up there, what was going to be the plan.

Did we have a plan to put out this fire or was it just -- that was the scary thing for me when I entered the lobby and didn't see any firemen there. I have been to many third alarms, and that's one thing, when you have third alarms, there's a hundred firemen around the command center.

There wasn't one fireman in that lobby that I saw. There was only four chiefs and the Commissioner, something like that. Apparently their idea for fighting this thing and trying to get people out was just everybody up, everybody up.

The thing that scares me -- people say that we weren't lucky with this thing. I think we were. I think if this building would have collapsed an hour later, we would have had a

thousand firemen in there. If it would have collapsed three hours later, we would have had 10,000 firemen in those buildings.

That was going to be their aim, get everybody in there. If they weren't up in the building, they would have been standing around the command center in the lobby. They would have set up another one inside the other lobby.

So I think we were blessed when we only lost 300 guys at that time. We would have lost less civilians, but we would have lost tons and tons more firemen. I think that's something they should think about.

I don't know how they planned on putting that fire out. You've got 20, 30 --

Q. You bring a rollup up there with the intention of using it on a fire.

A. I don't know what the other intention was.

Q. Yeah, bringing it up that many floors.

A. I don't know what their idea was going to be for us to use that. I can't believe they thought -- I wonder if they had gotten any reports whether or not the standpipe was even

working at that time. I can't believe it was working if the inner core of the building was destroyed when the plane hit. That's where all the standpipes are.

Q. I don't know if it was available or not.

The officer of Engine 1, any other individual you may have seen prior to the collapses that you knew that did not survive this?

A. Not that I was with. He was really the only one. I only considered us with 1 Engine. We had seen 3 Truck on the way in. They had asked us which way was the lobby where the command center was. We pointed them to where we thought it was, and that's where they all proceeded. They went ahead of us. I guess being a Truck company, they told them to go right up. I don't believe any of those guys made it out. It was a small group.

They weren't with Patty Brown and those guys. It must have been other guys that made their way down there on their own. I wasn't sure if they had masks on. I'm not sure.

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: All right. The time is now 4:32. This now concludes the interview with Firefighter Marmion.

File No. 9110417

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEPHEN ZASA

Interview Date: January 2, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

S. ZASA

BATTALION CHIEF McGRATH: Today's date is Wednesday, January 2nd, 2002, the time is 1436 hours, and this is Battalion Chief James McGrath of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Stephen Zasa of the 21 Battalion. This interview will be regarding the events of September 11th, 2001. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Battalion 21.

Q. Steve, if you'll please state your name and just tell your story from the receipt of the alarm until as far as we can go.

A. I'm Stephen R. Zasa, Firefighter 1st Grade, and I've been detailed in the battalion for the past year and a half, and I was working the morning of September 11th. We responded to a box at Bayley Seton Hospital. We had received a report from the members coming out of the hospital that a possible plane had struck the World Trade Center.

Upon hearing that information, we took a ride down to Bay Street, and we had seen a lot of white smoke coming from the area where the World Trade Center is. So we proceeded to the pier, the Navy port where the ships dock down there, and we parked facing the World Trade Center and we saw a heavy smoke condition

S. ZASA

coming out of the top of the building. I think Chief Vallebuona at the time got on the radio with the dispatcher asking why it was only -- at the time, as far as we knew, it was a second alarm. We didn't see any signs of fire or flames. We weren't sure if a plane had really struck the World Trade. It was just a rumor. We didn't hear anything.

Upon that time I heard a plane roar. I had my window down and on my side we saw a plane flying very low come right across us and with a loud, you know, the engines revved up, and I had mentioned to him, I had no idea that it was heading towards that way, and I just said like where is this guy going, you know, he was extremely low, not realizing it was another plane heading towards the World Trade, and we saw it struck the building, we saw a big mushroom of flame, of fire coming up, and it was like disbelief, and he had gotten on the radio and notified the dispatcher another plane had struck the World Trade Center.

Then we were dispatched to the 32 Battalion. From there we had picked up a Chief, I don't know even his name, and an aide, extra cylinders, and we went through the tunnel, proceeded to the west side.

S. ZASA

Q. Here's a map, if it will help you at all.

A. Maybe West and Liberty we were? Maybe West and Vesey we were. I guess it was Vesey. When we got out of the car, Chief Vallebuona -- I can't remember. We just got out of the car and he went to see if he could get some information, came back to the car, and I just remember looking up and seeing the flames coming out, knowing that we had a -- you know, they were having a tough time up there.

As we opened up the doors, I couldn't even tell you how long it was after that but it wasn't too long, we had the battalion doors open, we were standing there, and then we saw everything -- we looked up and everything just started coming down. So we proceeded to run, I guess, towards the water, and we just got caught up in that cloud of smoke. I just remember turning around and seeing the cloud of smoke coming down and it just engulfed us.

I couldn't even remember if I heard things on the radio and I just can't remember. I remember just kneeling down and just stuff coming down all around us, choking, gagging on -- inhaled a lot of that dust. I heard somebody calling out. It was just like dead silence for a while, I didn't have no gear, no turnout

S. ZASA

coat, I just put my hands over my head, and I heard somebody calling out. I answered after a while and it wound up being Chief Vallebuona and we got together, made it to -- tried to find our way around.

We made it to a building. There was a doorman. We banged on the glass. He let us in. There may have been one or two civilians with us. We stayed there for a little while and we made it back out again and headed to where our battalion car was. I can't even remember what transpired during that. All I remember was he found a mask, he handed me my mask, he said it was going to get worse before it gets better, and then we heard the second rumble coming down and just took off again.

Upon that I fell to the ground and a fireman came up to me. He had his mask and full gear on. Again, I didn't have my gear, my helmet. I had nothing. He was sharing his mask with me and I think it was a PD guy with me. We got to a building a few blocks down. It was cops, a couple firemen, took us in the building, cleaned everything off, rinsed my mouth out again, came outside, saw parts of the plane on the ground and then just made it back to the car. I didn't know where Chief Vallebuona was then. I saw him at the

S. ZASA

scene again and we just remained there for a while and that was it. We started seeing the guys coming up from the ferry. I couldn't even tell you how long that was. I think that was about it.

Q. Is there anything that you can remember, any companies, any --

A. I just remember seeing a rig there. I looked for an extra cylinder on the way back up again. After the second plane came in, there was nothing. Dead silence. I just saw flashing lights again. No cylinders, didn't hear anybody, just maybe saw a couple guys at the curb, just guys milling around, I guess. I think everybody was in shock. We heard planes flying up above and thought there were still attacks. Everybody was kind of like crouching down again, kneeling down, not knowing if they were dropping bombs or what was going on. It was just a lot of silence, you just saw the lights on the rigs and I may have heard radio transmissions. I can't remember. Basically, that's about all I can remember.

Q. Can you remember any of the specifics of any of the radio transmissions?

A. No, at this time I can't.

Q. Okay. Is there anything else that you can

S. ZASA

possibly think of that might add to this?

A. No, that's just basically it.

BATTALION CHIEF McGRATH: Okay, Steve. I want to thank you very much for the interview. This will conclude the interview, then. The time is 1445 and thank you very much for all your help.

File No. 9110419

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD CARLETTI

Interview Date: January 2, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

R. CARLETTI

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: Today's date is January the 2nd, 2002, the time is now 7:35 p.m., and this is Lieutenant Joseph Chiafari of the Safety Command of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, Richard Carletti of Engine Company No. 5, about the events of September the 11th, 2001.

Q. If you can for the record state your name and location of where you were working at the day of the incident.

A. Richard Carletti, Firefighter 1. I was working at Engine 5. I was assigned for a 24-hour tour assigned at 9:00 a.m. that morning.

Well, here's how my morning starts. I usually come in around 8:00 like everyone does, but I went to vote, so I was late. I was coming up Allen, which turns into First. When I was crossing Delancey Street, I saw a jet in front of me, which was the first jet. He was pretty low. He was probably about 30 stories. Now I'm heading north and crossing Delancey Street on Allen and I see the jet make a move toward the Trade Center. It made a southwesterly turn from that point.

I proceeded up First Avenue, left on 14th,

R. CARLETTI

parked in front of the firehouse. Fireman Lynn was there. He said they were out on a box, they wouldn't let him on because they thought they had a good job, and right then he told me a plane just crashed into the Trade Center. It was the same exact plane I just saw.

I proceeded upstairs. I got dressed. We left here about five to 9:00. We made a left going west on 14th Street, left on Second Avenue. I was in my personal car. We started taking the lights on First Avenue. We got to about 2nd Street and Second Avenue and we saw Ladder 7 was on a gas leak. We asked them if they were going to the Trade Center. They said no, they weren't assigned yet. We were on the east side of the street. We went to make a right on Houston, and right when we were making the right on Houston, we saw a fireball in the sky, which at this point was the second impact, so that puts it 9:06, turning right onto Houston.

We went down -- I figured I was in my personal car, we wouldn't make it down Broadway. We thought it would be backed up. I made a left on Lafayette, which is a one-way north. I was going south. I stopped in front of 20 Truck. There was one guy there. He said everybody already left. We

R. CARLETTI

proceeded down. We went on the side of I guess Lafayette, right down by City Hall, we made a left and we parked over by 6 Engine on Beekman, parked the car on the sidewalk, grabbed our gear and proceeded to walk up Beekman to Park Row, down Park Row to Broadway. We stopped in front of a building, left our boots inside the building on Broadway, got dressed and proceeded west on Liberty.

When we turned the corner west on Liberty, figure it was probably about 9:15 at this time, there was a good 20 floors of fire in the south tower. I mean, it was pushing red on at least 20 floors from what we could see. I turned to Tommy and I said, Tommy, this building is in danger of collapse. In my opinion, I didn't think there was going to be a catastrophic collapse, but from the fire load, there was no way.

When we passed 10 and 10, there's a bridge that runs I guess into one of the buildings directly south of Trade Center No. 2. There's a pedestrian walkway. As we passed that, we came into the debris field. It was jet parts and body parts. I distinctly remember seeing a woman's hand. It was cut off at the wrist. She had wedding ring, so it had to be a left

R. CARLETTI

hand, and then I looked to the left and I just saw the rib cage with nothing in it and there was just debris.

At that point we stopped for a second and we heard impacts, which I guess was jumpers hitting the pavement. To our right, there was a parking lot right on West and Liberty. There were about seven cars on fire. We just walked -- there was a line there just dropped. We walked across West Street, found an engine company, and they said the command post is just north of here in front of World Financial Center.

We walked up there and we told a Chief we were two from 5 Engine. He told us go in the street, secure masks, irons, whatever tools you can get, and he ordered us to not go into the buildings, to come back to the command post. So most of the rigs were stripped in front of the Trade Center. There was nothing in them. The equipment was already taken.

We walked up West Street, past the Verizon, one block north of Vesey, and we found our engine, 5 Engine, parked there. I guess the chauffeur's radio was on step. I guess when he changed, he forgot to put it back on. I took his radio. We looked in the rig. There was nothing in there. All the doors were open. It was pretty much empty. I found a mask on 91

R. CARLETTI

Engine. We looked for about another five minutes. We didn't find any other equipment. So all we had was one mask between the two of us.

We went back to the command post. We met a captain from 91 Engine, told him who we were. He walked over to the command post, told them who we were, and that's when we saw Paul Mitchell. He just got made out of Ladder 110. He was a covering officer here, covering lieutenant. I figure at this point that was probably about quarter to, ten to 10:00. So I saw all the Chiefs there. The officer from 91 took our names, told us to stand over there.

There was a driveway there that went into, I guess, one of the World Financial buildings. We went over and we stood on the burn in front of the Winter Garden room. We were just south of the north bridge standing on the grass area. I think EMS was setting up their command post behind us. When I saw Paul Mitchell, I was joking because he had a firefighter's helmet on instead of a lieutenant's, so I guess he grabbed equipment from 110. He got off that morning.

We were standing there. The officer from 91 says stay here, we're going to get two more guys and get teamed up, and what went through my mind was – the

R. CARLETTI

only thing I was annoyed at was that we were going to have to hike 80 floors. We stood there for about ten minutes and I just heard a loud groan by everyone in the street. I guess the south tower started to lean. The top 30 floors leaned over. I was looking up at the north tower. I was trying to monitor more what was going on in the north tower with the radio, and they were on three different channels at this point.

I looked up and about the 70th floor I saw the western wall of the south tower start to belly out. Tommy turned, said run. He started running and I turned around behind him and we ran into the revolving door of the Winter Garden room, which is a glass atrium, I guess about ten stories high. As I went through the revolving door, I was in with an EMS guy and I either tripped her up or knocked her over. I remember picking her up. We went back around to the back. Everybody started going into the Winter Garden room. I remember the floor rumbling and the lights went out at this point in that hallway. Everybody started to go into the Winter Garden room. It's got a glass roof, so I told them to move north.

We went to the American Express Building. We ran north. So this was about five after 10:00. We

R. CARLETTI

proceed to go back out on the north side of the building. The dust was just too intense. You couldn't see more than five feet at this point. So we went back in. We waited about another five minutes. We went out. The Captain from 91 Engine was covered in dust. We looked in two more rigs for any equipment. There was nothing. We went to the corner. We saw Tom Manley, sergeant at arms of the union.

We stood on that corner. A Chief came over and ordered us to go north. He wanted everyone to go north. I said, Tommy, let's go back to 5 Engine. When we walked back to 5 Engine, we found Lieutenant Bohack, Firefighter Jim Andruzzi, Firefighter Eddie Mecner backing the rig up and Eddie was all over the road with the rig. They came out of the seat and I got in the seat. We backed into a side street, turned the rig around and proceeded north and we parked on Warren Street one block south of Chambers. I guess now this was about 10:25. We stood there for another four minutes and the south tower collapsed -- I mean the north tower collapsed.

When the north tower collapsed, I remember seeing the antenna do a little rock back and forth and I could just hear the floors pancaking. I heard it for

R. CARLETTI

about 30 pancakes, just boom, boom, boom, boom, and the dust blew up to us.

We ran about one block north. The dust settled. We went back to the rig, threw the equipment back on the rig, what was on the sidewalk, our jackets and radios. We took the rig. We went east. We made a left on Greenwich and we proceeded north. We came back around in front of Stuyvesant High School. They were setting up a command post there. I mean, you could listen to the monitors. Basically they wanted engines was booster tanks to come down and extinguish the car fires then going.

We stood there for about another 20 minutes. That's when we figured out who we were missing. We were missing Manny Delvalle, Gerard Gorman and Brogan were now missing at this point, and Eddie Mecner confirmed that Brogan was put in an ambulance, and about ten minutes later Gerard Gorman came walking up. He was covered in dust and pretty shocked. So he proceeded to get in an ambulance and go to the hospital at that point.

We got the rig cleaned up and we proceeded from -- when we were on Chambers Street, we were blocked out. We went over, down to Chambers Street, we

went across behind City Hall, made a right. We made a U-turn past City Hall along the Brooklyn Bridge. We went over to the east side, completely around Manhattan. We came up Broadway from the south, made a left on Exchange and a right on Broadway, and we came up to Thames and we shut the rig down and there was absolute silence. There were only six firefighters at this point over there. It was about 15 minutes after the collapse, the second collapse.

We checked the hydrants. We only found hydrants working on the east side of the street. The west side were all shut down, were all dead. At this point it was Bohack, Lieutenant Bohack, Andruzzi, Mecner, Lynn. They proceeded to walk north up Broadway. I stayed with the rig. I eventually moved the rig forward where I ran into my brother's Lieutenant and he had a spare rig. He was going to go down Dey Street and I was going to augment him, but another engine decided to augment. I came back around. I parked on Liberty and Broadway and I proceeded to augment 247, which was on Church and Liberty, and we stayed there until about 6:00 o'clock that night.

We went back to the house, we got our eyes

washed, we went back down at 11:00 p.m. with 3 Truck, with the rest of the battalion. We went to 10 and 10 command post. We went to about the middle of the pile, but we were just -- at this point we extinguished fires most of the night almost in the center of the complex and just west of what was left of building No. 4. We were on the pile just with three hand lines putting out fires until 9:00 o'clock in the morning.

Q. So that was during the nighttime, then, you were putting fires out on the pile?

A. Yes. And that was it.

Q. So you had mentioned about repositioning your rig just prior to the second collapse?

A. Our rig was parked -- I don't know the name of the street. It's one block north of Vesey. It was on the northbound side facing south. They came and they were parked on the hydrant. When I got there, Eddie was backing the rig up and he was having a hard time with it and so I got in the seat. We backed into a street and then we proceeded to go north.

Q. Had any of the guys that were working with the rig, had they returned back to the -- the guys who were working in Engine 5 that day, had they returned back to the rig?

R. CARLETTI

A. Yes. At that point it was Lieutenant Bohack, Firefighter Andruzzi, Firefighter Mecner, and at that point we were missing Firefighter Brogan, Firefighter Delvalle and Firefighter Gorman. That's when we went up to Warren Street and we parked. Then when the second collapse happened, that's when we brought the rig --

Q. Around?

A. We went up to Greenwich, made a left. Greenwich is a southbound street. We went up, came past I think it was Manhattan Community College. We made a left. We came back down Stuyvesant. From this point we just went like a complete circle back down to Stuyvesant High School. Then they told us there was a bomb scare and we had to move the rig north from there.

Q. You said you were wearing a handy-talky.

Were there any significant handy-talky transmissions that you did hear at any point prior to, during, or after any of the collapses?

A. About 10:15, 10:20, I finally heard the Maydays for the north tower, to evacuate the north tower. Prior to that I didn't hear any Maydays. I mean, I heard a lot of chatter, nothing of really any significance. I didn't hear any Maydays or anything.

R. CARLETTI

It was mostly command post instructions of the Chiefs being moved around. I didn't hear anything else.

That's the first time I heard the Mayday.

Q. About 10:15?

A. Yes. We also started repeating the Maydays on our radios because we were on the corner of Vesey and West Street. We were on the southwest side, that's when we were standing with Manley, and they were also blowing the air horns.

Q. Besides Lieutenant Mitchell that you had seen, any other individuals that you had seen that you're aware of that did not make it out of the collapse debris?

A. No, he's the only one I can remember. I don't think I saw anyone else at the command post. I remember seeing Hayden and I saw Ganci.

Q. At the command post you saw Chief Ganci?

A. Yes. I saw Von Essen there.

Q. This is the command post that was on West Street?

A. West Street. It was on the garage ramp in front of I guess that's -- I think it's 2 World Financial Center. There's a south building in the World Financial Center complex.

R. CARLETTI

Q. Right. On the same side as the Winter Garden?

A. Yes.

Q. So you never entered any of the tower buildings?

A. No.

Q. So, primarily, when you came around from the Liberty Street side, you walked on West Street?

A. Yes. We were across the street.

Q. Oh, on the west side of West Street?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. Because when we stood in front of -- right past 10 and 10, past that north -- we were really underneath the bridge. There's a pedestrian bridge that used to cross Liberty just south of 10 and 10. Is that a Bankers Trust building there? I don't know what the name of it is.

Q. I'm not sure of the name of the building.

A. Blockbuster.

Q. There's a south walkway, though, that goes across West Street.

A. When we got past there, that's when we entered the debris field and you heard shotgun blasts,

and when I looked -- I don't know if Tommy looked, but I could see what was lying on the ground. It was just a pile of meat, red. So I said to Tommy, let's get out of here. There's too many humans coming down from the building. I figured that had to be about 9:15, 9:20, and there was a good 20 to 25 floors of fire.

But, see, there were no Chiefs on that east side of that building. When we walked down Liberty, we were the only two firefighters on Liberty. There was no observation on that side.

Q. Nobody was on the Liberty Street side or the --

A. No. 10 and 10 was empty. The doors were open and there wasn't a soul in the building. I don't know if they were open. I think they were open. We looked and there was no one in there.

Q. So, actually, on the Liberty Street side there was no apparatus that was parked there?

A. There was apparatus parked on the corner of I think it was -- or it probably might have been Ladder 10 that was parked on -- Liberty's got two lanes in each direction. It's got an island in the middle of it. They blocked off -- there used to be two ways in each direction. I think it was Ladder 10 that was

parked there. I'm not sure. I don't really remember.

I remember when I seen the body hit the ground, I thought I saw Ladder 10 parked there. I mean, I don't remember.

There were engines parked across the street.

I don't remember who they were. They were across on Liberty, across West Street. I don't remember seeing any other -- in truth, I don't remember seeing any apparatus but that one on the corner.

Q. Otherwise everything else was in the middle of Liberty or on West Street?

A. West Street, yes.

Q. Okay, Rich. Anything else of significance that you'd like to add to this interview that you feel it's important?

A. No. Just that when we walked down Liberty, I found that we were the only ones there and that was odd to me. There was no observation on that side of the building.

Q. Okay.

A. When I got to the command post, what was I going to say? I mean, I've got seven years on the job. I remember telling the Chief I think this building is in dire need, it's going to collapse.

R. CARLETTI

There was one point at the command post, I mean, I don't know about the battalion, but I felt I could have just walked away and no one would have known, but I didn't.

Q. You did what you thought was right.

A. Yes. I mean, I ran ten minutes later, but that was self preservation.

Q. The intentions were well at that time to do what you had to do to go down there. Okay. So if there's nothing further?

A. No.

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: This now concludes the interview with Firefighter Carletti. The time is now 7:54 p.m.

File No. 9110420

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER GERARD GORMAN

Interview Date: January 2, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

G. GORMAN

LIEUTENANT CHIAFARI: Today's date is January the 2nd, 2002. The time is now 8:25 p.m. and this is Lieutenant Chiafari of the Safety Command of the Fire Department of New York City. I am conducting an interview with the following individual, Gerard Gorman of Engine Company No. 5, regarding the events of September the 11th, 2001.

Q. Would you please state your name and the unit you were assigned to and position for that day?

A. Gerard Gorman, Engine 5, control man.

Q. Can you tell us the events of September the 11th?

A. I came in and relieved one of the two details from 6 Engine. The other guy, he made it out, and the other guy, John from 20 Truck, John Burnside from 20 Truck, he was relieved by Manny, who didn't make it out.

Q. When you say relieved, he had worked here the night before; is that what you're saying?

A. Yes.

Q. So this is prior to --

A. This is like 8:15 or something.

Q. Okay. This is before the alarm had come in?

A. Right. He got relieved by him. Burnside,

G. GORMAN

then went to 20 Truck and relieved somebody there, and we'll get back to this later, but the guy who helped lead me out was the guy that Burnside relieved. So it was like, I guess, an ironic twist you could say. Anyway, so we relieved these guys, and then around 8:30 a box came in that sounded like a phone alarm came in for 19th Street and Irving, and that's a nice area, you never get a phone alarm from there, so we thought it was a good box.

We got on our rig. We were second due. 14 Engine was first. We were second. Ladder 3, I don't know who the second truck would be on there. 7 maybe. I don't know. And it was really nothing. We barely got off the rig and then we were just checking hydrants and stuff. Then the officer yelled there was a 1060, we tried to make ourselves 10-8 real quick. 1060 just came that a plane crashed into the Trade Center.

So we backed the rig up. We started down Irving. I remember looking up. We were walking towards P.C. Richards. At P.C. Richards I was trying to see on -- they had all these TVs in P.C. Richards and I was trying to see if they had it on TV already and they didn't. There was an interview on the Today Show.

G. GORMAN

We made the right turn on 14th Street. Then when we get down like Broadway and 5th Avenue, you can see the Trade Center, you can see the plane hit. As a matter of fact --

Q. What do you mean, you could see the plane hit?

A. You could see the aftermath of the first plane hitting.

Q. Oh, the aftermath. Okay.

A. As a matter of fact, Derek Brogan, who was with us, had said that plane was flying low when we were on 19 and Irving before it hit. He said, gee, that's the plane that hit it. I didn't notice it, but he did.

Anyway, so the box came in. We went. We were yelling at the chauffeur not to go down Broadway, to go down West Street, it would be faster. We went down West Street and we could see it in the raw. Pretty much in the rig you could just see fire from the skin. You could see the skin cut like in an angle, and I remember, we didn't know it was an airliner and I thought maybe it was an executive jet or something. I knew it was bigger than a Cessna, you know, a private plane, but I didn't think it was that big. You could

G. GORMAN

see about eight or ten stories cut in an angle. I remember saying, well, the good news is it's vented, you know, dopey fireman thing, and I remember just saying in the rig, I remember talking to Manny in front of me and saying just stay together, stay together, stay together. I was going to say it so often.

Then we got down there towards West Street. It was funny watching the people as you go down West Street watching it and stuff. So we go down West Street. We got off a block north of Vesey Street and we all got out of the rig. Our chauffeur came with us, too. We all got dressed up. Everybody was taking extra cylinders. I was control, so I got the irons and the control bag. Manny took the oxygen, which he took a little longer, but it was a good idea.

So we went in and we rushed in --

Q. You had a radio, of course, right?

A. I had a radio. I had control radio. So we rushed in to the lobby and pretty much pretty quick the guy, Gregg Atlas, who didn't make it out, from 10 Engine, came over to us and said to us, 5 Engine, you're going up to the fire. Just put water on the fire.

Somewhere along the line I heard the elevator

G. GORMAN

drop. He said, oh, shit, and just right after he said that, you heard a huge explosion, and I looked to my right and I could see the reflection, just the whole Financial Center, a reflection of flames just turn orange, basically, because it's all glass, you know, turn orange and you saw it.

Then we just start marching up the stairs. I don't know which staircase it was, B or C. I don't remember. It was around and we had to walk around an elevator shaft sort of. But we were with 10 Engine. 10 Engine was ahead. I think their officer got ahead of us because it was like trying to get into the subway train on rush hour, you know, because there's two people coming out of the door at a time and it was overly full and we're trying to rush our way in, and he might have got ahead of us. He got a good head start. We all had a hard time getting in to the stairwell and we were yelling to people as we were going in there, as we finally got in, everybody stay to your right, everybody stay to your right. We got in and we started marching up. That's the last time I saw Manny. I never saw him again. Because he was behind me, I think. I'm pretty sure.

So we start marching up and about the 4th

G. GORMAN

floor, 5th floor, one burn victim came down. I think she said the 60th something floor. I don't know. I think I heard that. I'm not sure. I don't think that's possible, but I can't be sure.

Q. Sixty?

A. Something floor.

Q. Sixtieth floor possibly?

A. It could have been possibly with the elevator. I don't know.

Q. You saw this person and you were on what; you were still on the lower floors?

A. Yes. 4th, 5th, 6th, something. Before we took a break. We took a break early at around the 8th, 10th floor. See, the problem with taking breaks was every fourth or fifth floor was the only entry point, and you've got to realize, we've got the key for every door, basically, the Halligan, but to take the time to force a door, we stopped the whole line of people behind you. So we just waited until we opened a door and go. I think we stopped at the 8th floor.

See, at that time somebody yelled, get oxygen for that lady. She was walking down. She was a burn victim. Her skin was peeling and stuff and she -- I think I seen a picture of her later in one of these

G. GORMAN

photo galleries. I can't be sure. A lady maybe in her forties or something. We think that Manny gave her oxygen because he had the oxygen with him and that he had helped. He got delayed back.

So we're marching up. I didn't know whether he did that. I don't know if he was two guys behind me or one guy behind me. I don't even remember. I wish I did.

Q. So really that's the last you ever had any contact with him?

A. Right.

Q. But he didn't notify anybody or say anything like I'm going to --

A. We never heard him.

Q. In other words, he wasn't like right directly behind you where he turned around and said that --

A. See, we weren't because when we had to get into that stairway, we were just like a mass of humanity. It wasn't like you could get in one, one, one, one. It's like the subway, you know, one person get in with 20 people behind you. Like I said, the officer from 10 was way ahead. That's what I think happened to him.

So we got on the 8th floor and we took a

G. GORMAN

blow. We were looking out the stairway for Manny, but you can only open the door so much. The doors open in and they were only going two across the stairs. The doors had nowhere to go other than against that wall, and any time you opened a door, we stopped the line. Now, if we're stopping the line from way down there, can you imagine what it was on the 90th floor just below the hit and everybody's trying to rush out and they're fucking opening doors? Every time you opened a door, you stopped the line. That's like kicking me in the head. I bring it up to people now, these doors should be sliding doors in all the newer buildings. I know you can't do it now but...

Q. It's after the fact.

So actually you're walking up the stairs. Intermittently you're stopping. So how far are you walking up and about how long does it take you to go up?

A. See, I only know that by the time we get to the 24th floor, that's when the first building collapsed, the south tower.

Q. Is that had highest point you remember getting to is the 24th floor?

A. Twenty-third or fourth. I'm not sure.

G. GORMAN

Q. Okay. And that was around the same time of the first --

A. I can tell you who was in that office. It was Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

Q. The same floor as Blue Cross/Blue Shield; is that what you're saying?

A. That was the 18th floor for sure, the 19th floor. I'm not sure what was on the 24th floor. Anyway --

Q. So, in other words, you wound up stopping at that point, then, to the 24th?

A. Yes. We stopped a couple times.

Q. Go ahead.

A. We stopped. 10 we stopped and like 13th, 14th, 15th floor. Then around the 18th floor the guy Derek was saying he had chest pains, our guy. He had chest pains and we went to check him out. We got water. I remember cops opened up the water, you know, the machines and stuff.

On that floor, on the 18th floor, there was already a lady, a black lady, she had air from a respirator which was on the floor. She was being attended to and I was now looking for a respirator for Derek because Manny had gone. We thought Manny was

G. GORMAN

with that burn victim, maybe out of the building helping her or I don't know. I didn't know. We didn't know. So we went to help her. We were helping Derek.

In the meantime, I'm trying to find the rest of the guys of 10 Engine and our officer. We're trying to find them. We were supposed to be together because that whole time we're thinking we're still going up there to put the fire out. Later on we're hearing, now, after the fact, that people were saying there was an evacuation when that plane hit, the second plane hit, from the get-go. We didn't know. Because we're trying to call down to say that we had a firefighter down. At this time there were a lot of Maydays, a lot of Maydays going on for firemen with chest pains, a shitload of them.

Q. You mean that you were aware of; you heard a lot of Maydays?

A. Yes. You were like at that point, because you had your hands full yourself. You couldn't help. So I'm trying to get oxygen for our guy, but when we were looking around, I ran into the guys at 1 Truck at that point and we started forcing doors. We were looking for fucking oxygen for Derek. We didn't find any. So then I tried to call up by the fire phone, you

G. GORMAN

know, the red phone, call down. There was no answer.

Q. The fire warden's phone?

A. Yes. We tried the fire warden's phone to call down to the lobby command post. Nobody picked up. Nothing. Dead. It seemed like it was dead. I mean, we still had electricity and stuff, we still had running water.

Q. The lights were still working up there?

A. Yes. Because I remember taking a coffee pot and just throwing water over our heads like that. So we had water. There was water working in those pipes. We don't know if the standpipes worked. But I would have loved to have tested the standpipes, but it was too crowded in that stairwell to do it.

Q. You never knew.

A. I mean, we're trying to go two floors below.

Q. Of course.

A. It would be nice to know but....

Q. So you were attending to --

A. Derek. So, finally, we probably get to a land line, I called 911 and I said there's a fireman down. That was definitely the Blue Cross office. I went into a cubicle.

Q. You used a telephone?

G. GORMAN

A. Yes. I walked into the cubicle and called.

Q. You got a 911 operator?

A. Yes. Or did I call the dispatcher? You know, I don't even remember.

Q. You identified yourself as --

A. A fireman in the building. It was either the fire dispatcher or -- I might have just called the fire dispatcher. I don't remember, obviously.

Q. In other words, you don't know if you called on the 261 number or the 911 number?

A. Yes. I don't remember. I think I probably called 261. I'm sure it would be on tape if you still got it, you know, tell them we had a firefighter down. Then we tried to make our way up again. We made a push. He said I feel all right, dah-dah-dah, then he felt bad again. Then a couple Port Authority cops came up with oxygen, and as we were administering the air, we ran into a couple of guys in 9 truck who were having problems themselves.

Meanwhile, somewhere in this whole picture, I was trying to find a Chief -- now I'm going back and forth because things are popping in my head. But like on the 18th floor, after we called the dispatcher or whatever I did, I remember telling -- I was trying to

G. GORMAN

find -- like I only found a Captain and I said, is there any way we can tell the people down below to drop their roll-ups, to drop their weight, basically. We're hauling up there, but we're going to be in no shape to do anything.

Q. No. It was just like just get the manpower up there.

A. Yeah, get the manpower. We'll bring the hoses. We got the hoses this far, so let's get the guys behind us to drop their roll-ups because it's fucking -- you know, I'm not thinking there's 20 fucking floors higher either. My sense is we've got to hit the first fire we see and that's it. I remember doing that. I don't remember who I told it to. I remember the guy had a mustache, but I didn't see his picture or anything. I think he's a Captain somewhere.

There was something else that I wanted to say. We marched up to the 23rd, 24th floor, like I said, and the Port Authority cops came and they gave Derek oxygen, and somewhere during this thing there was a huge rumbling and we were about to mount up there -- oh, I know what I wanted to say.

On the 18th floor, when I ran back into the

G. GORMAN

guys at 10 Engine and they were resting and they were throwing water on themselves and trying to cool off and we were doing the same thing, I asked them where their officer was. They didn't know. So they called him on the radio, Gregg Atlas, and they said to him, 10, 10, backup, or 10 control to 10, whoever the control kid was, and they found him. He was on the 43rd or 46th floor. So he was 23 floors ahead of us. But right there, when he got the initial break-in to that stairwell, that was like enough where he probably had a clear path, you know, he's a little lighter so he went faster.

Q. He made it that much faster than you guys?

A. Yes.

Q. Plus he's not carrying any additional weight.

A. So I wanted to bring that up. I'm sure they do, too. They did. They're now being interviewed. But he was 23 floors ahead of us at the time. Well, it was on the 18th floor when we made that call.

Q. So you recall him mentioning that he was --

A. I was next to the guy when he called.

Q. He actually called on the radio?

A. Yes.

G. GORMAN

Q. And he actually made contact with him; he said he's on the 40-something floor?

A. 43rd or 46th floor. We said, oh, shit, he's way ahead of us. But he never asked us where we were. He must have had his hands full, too.

Q. I'm surprised you were able to get through that many floors on the radio.

A. Yes. We didn't think of that. We fucking didn't think of that shit. I mean, you're hearing Maydays like crazy.

So now I get back to we're on the 23rd, 24th floor, we're drinking water, we're getting loaded up again to go back up, we're taking our roll-ups again because we didn't hear nothing about no this is an evacuation. We still don't know, of course, and we're trying to stay together with 10. We're like making more and more of an effort to stay together because it's very hard.

Then it was like a fucking rumbling. It was like an earthquake. It was like worse and worse. All the windows blew in. It got real dark.

Q. The floor you were on, the windows blew in?

A. Yes. I think so.

Q. Wow. So, in other words, they gave way?

G. GORMAN

A. I think. I think. I remember diving into the core of the building by the elevators. I fucking forgot my mask, dove in, just diving. It was like an earthquake. It was shaking and then the lights went out and it got shitty in there. We all made it back in the stairway, all got out -- I mean, our officer, Lieutenant Bohack, said that's it, we're going out. That's it, we're out of here. He made the call. I don't know if he heard it on the radio or not. I didn't hear it. He said, we're getting out of here. I found my mask. Actually, Eddie Mecner gave it to me. He was the chauffeur who came up with us. We started our way down and there were still civilians coming down but less, not as thick.

Q. There were still people coming?

A. Yes. But they weren't like from offices. Some of them looked like custodians and stuff of some sort, and I started sharing my mask with them going down the stairs. We just turned the regular air on because at first, the first guy put it on didn't take a breath, so I just turned the thing on and give it to him. Every time we hit a landing, I gave him a quick hit, a couple, three, four people, I gave them quick hits on the way down. It was dark. You could only see

G. GORMAN

the reflector lights. My flashlight died. It always dies when you need it.

We start our way down. We start our way down and the rest of the company had switched stairs at some point and I didn't know that because I was lagging behind with those civilians, I guess. I didn't hear them switch and I kept going down the same staircase. I don't know if it was A, B, C.

Q. What did they switch?

A. They switched staircases.

Q. They switched staircases?

A. Somebody told one of the guys like on the fourth floor that it was locked and you can't get out, so they switched. But I didn't know that. I guess he had bad information or maybe I did switch and didn't even know. I don't even remember.

So I kept on going down and then I hit the bottom of the staircase where there's like some sort of a custodian locker area, and there were two guys from 20 Truck there that were leading the people out. I forget the name of the black guy and some guy -- the guy I told you that Burnside relieved, that guy. I forgot his name now. I know the faces in my head.

So they led us out and we actually went

G. GORMAN

through this custodian area, the lockers and stuff like that, and we ended up not on the lobby level but the level above, like that mezzanine level. We ended up there and there were doors going out into that -- not the concourse level, I guess, that's the lower level, but the outside level, the park area level on Vesey Street. Remember where they used to have the concerts and that globe thing and the fountains?

Q. This is outdoors now?

A. No, I'm not outdoors yet, but that's where it led to.

Q. That's where it leads to?

A. Right.

Q. Because you're actually like --

A. In the lobby but on the mezzanine.

Q. So from that stairway you were coming down, you actually wound up in the custodial locker area?

A. Yes.

Q. Not directly into it but --

A. Yes. We went right by it. We went right in it. I walked right through it.

Q. Really?

A. There were lockers. I think it was a custodial locker area. I think. Then I got there and

G. GORMAN

there was a cop at the door, but he was off duty. I remember talking with him later. He was putting his retirement papers in or vacation papers in or something like that. I can't remember.

There was a guy, he was in one of the smaller buildings, 4 or 5 World Trade Center, he's under the overhang of that and he was looking up, and he was looking up because bodies were jumping and he was giving us the go, okay, when to let people out to go, and at that point we started letting the civilians out and they ran. They got led out. There was a guy, he was a lookout, and he looked out and, I mean, this is like -- it must have took 15 minutes to get down those stairs, I guess. Maybe. I don't know. I have no idea how long I was out there.

A Chief came over to me and ordered me to help, you know, help them get back. All right. He was a black guy and I've never seen him before. I have no idea who the hell he is. I still don't know. So he ordered us to stay there and help. So I was helping, we were letting people out, they were coming down and coming down, and it was not a steady stream, but it was like three here, three there, like three then a minute break. I remember looking down the lobby and seeing

G. GORMAN

like companies coming in and coming out. I could see them marching through the lobbies. I didn't know who they were.

Then it was the last batch. We were --

Q. So you're observing this from an upper level?

A. Yes. But you could see. I just saw them marching by like briefly. I don't remember anybody I know and stuff like that.

Q. Approximately what time do you think this is?

A. This is ten minutes before the collapse. And nobody, you know, like nobody -- at that point I did not know the first building collapsed still. Didn't know. We thought it was a missile attack or something like that. We thought we were under attack. They didn't have any idea that this building could collapse. I didn't hear nothing. As a matter of fact, the radio traffic I heard after the first building collapsed, I remember distinctively somebody yelling looking for Chief Barbera, yelling for Chief Barbera, where are you, something like that. I heard a Mayday for a fireman down. I thought I heard Ladder 3 give a Mayday, either it was for a fireman with chest pains or maybe the collapse. I'm not sure. It could be something I heard about now and I'm still thinking in

G. GORMAN

my memory, you know? I don't know. Anyway, I didn't know that first building collapsed.

Q. You didn't know.

A. No. Didn't hear no evacuation, didn't hear nothing over the PA system. So the Chief told us stay, and then there was a guy, some Port Authority emergency service cops, an ESU cop, and a guy from Squad 18, Pat Kelly, they had just brought a heart attack victim down on a chair, a heavy guy, and had a hard time carrying him through, and he was the last guy that they got out. So they had a hard time with all the debris down. They were rolling him, you know, once they got him down on the lobby. But once they got outside the doors and they had the go-ahead, they had a hard time getting him through the debris because they couldn't roll him all the way and they had to pick him up and stuff like that.

Then me and the other guy, we looked and there was nobody else coming. For some reason we decided to leave. I don't know why. We leave. I remember seeing as I got to the overhang on the other end of the smaller buildings and --

Q. This is now you're exiting the building?

A. Exiting the building.

G. GORMAN

Q. Do you remember what exit, what door it led out to?

A. That was the lobby on whatever area that -- what kind of area was that? I'll tell you what it led to.

Q. Does it go directly out to West Street?

A. No. It goes to Vesey Street. On Vesey Street there's a staircase and escalators. That's where it led to. So on the overhang I remember seeing a frigging Bomb Squad cop and I asked him, what the hell blew up? He goes, I don't know. Oh, shit. Fucking he don't know.

So I ended up going down there, and then between the two small buildings there's an opening, a space, and then I heard rumbling again right as I was in that space, me and the Port Authority cops, the ESU cop, the Bomb Squad cop, I guess, we heard the rumble. We all ducked into the overhang of, I guess, 5 World Trade Center, where the staircase was. We ducked in there and everything got dark. I mean, it was like a rumble and it was like another earthquake again. I just dove into by the window between two metal bars, got down like that. I had my mask. I should have put my mask on at that point. I didn't think of it.

G. GORMAN

Q. It's still strapped to your back, your mask.

A. Yes. But never on my face because it was a sunny day, clear as a bell.

Q. But things are still on your back, though.

A. Yes.

Q. This is actually on Vesey?

A. That staircase is on Vesey. I got a picture at home of it. It's an outside staircase.

Q. It's on the opposite side of the street of Vesey?

A. No. It's on the same side.

Q. It's on the Trade Center side?

A. Yes, with the escalators and stuff.

Q. This is where you're jumping into right now?

A. Yes. I jumped into that and all the dirt came in your face, it got real black and dark, couldn't see, and all the dirt, it was just like you had your mouth closed but it like forced its way in, there was so much pressure. I started gagging on it and then I started choking. I thought that was it, you know, and then here we go, I mean, here we go. And it stopped. It got quiet. It just stopped right before I was ready to fricking -- I mean, I was eating the crap. It got dark and we stayed there and I remember the cop behind

G. GORMAN

me goes, this is the second time it happened to me, I think it was a Port Authority cop, the second time it happened to me, and we were standing there, like we just waited until it lifted.

Q. You were holed together there for a little while? How long were you there for?

A. I don't know. Five minutes, ten minutes. I don't know.

Q. It was still totally dark.

A. Yes. Then it like lifted and we went down the stairs and kind of like you dug yourself out a little bit. It's not much dirt but --

Q. What do you mean, you went down the stairs? You still were not at sidewalk level at this point?

A. No.

Q. This is still taking place where you were huddled on the --

A. We're on top of the staircase. Top of the staircase.

Q. So when everything cleared away --

A. We went down the stairs.

Q. Was it accessible to move through the way you were going?

A. Yes. We just walked down the stairs.

G. GORMAN

Q. It was cluttered with debris?

A. Yes.

Q. But it's not like any of the people that you were next to or near were trapped?

A. No, nothing. We didn't hit a thing. Like I said, I didn't know that building collapsed then either. That never went in my head. The Trade Center, shit, you didn't think of it. You couldn't tell if you looked up. There was nothing to look up to. It was black. If I had looked up, I still wouldn't have seen it. I wouldn't have known.

Let's go, I know the way out, one of the cops said, and you came out and you were on Vesey Street and all you see was cars on fire all over the place. I was like shook up, I guess. I went down Vesey Street. We went down Vesey Street and I hear this guy screaming the ESU truck is going to blow because they were worried about the ammo, I guess.

Q. Oh, really?

A. It's going to blow, get out of here. I went down to is it Murray Street? It started clearing up around there.

Q. This is walking on what street, West Street now, most likely?

G. GORMAN

A. No. Washington.

Q. You were walking down Washington?

A. Yes.

Q. Toward Murray?

A. Yes. No, Greenwich. It's Greenwich Street.

Q. So you were walking north on Greenwich
Street?

A. You know what? I don't know about that. I
can't tell on this map.

Q. Okay.

A. Murray. I ended up on Murray, going down
Greenwich.

Q. So you were with the cop?

A. Yes.

Q. Anybody else from 5 Engine that was --

A. No. I lost them early. I lost them. I was
alone.

Q. And those two guys from 20 Truck?

A. They had left beforehand. I was like the
last guy leaving. Some guys here think I'm the last
guy out, but I guess those guys from 6 Truck were.

Q. Knowing how people split up at that
particular incident, I mean, no one company remained
intact totally. So you were with nobody from 5 Engine

G. GORMAN

and then nobody recognizable from any of the surrounding companies when it actually collapsed?

A. As a matter of fact, going down the stairs, I heard my officer call me on the radio. He called me by name and I tried to call him back and I couldn't get through. I tried and I tried and I couldn't get through. It was just, you know, there were 500 guys.

Q. As you were coming down the stairs?

A. Yes. I guess when he thought he lost me, which he did. So anyway, I went down Warren Street. I remember some black guy giving me water or something and there was a bar to the left going towards West Street and the guy is like go in here. So I went in there and I got like water or something to drink and from there I called my wife to tell her I got out. It was the Brady Bunch Tavern.

Q. That you were safe and that you made it out of there?

A. Yes. Because they didn't know, you know. I talked to her, then left there. You wouldn't believe that the bar was packed. There were people there in the bar drinking. I figured there was like three guys there. I don't know.

Q. They probably didn't know what was happening

G. GORMAN

themselves either at that point.

A. I didn't even look at the TV or anything like that.

Q. So, unfortunately, you lost contact with them. Any significant things other than what we discussed, anything that's significant that you think you need to add?

A. No.

Q. Like people that you had seen?

A. I saw Timmy McSweeney from 3 Truck in the lobby on the way up. Like I said, I saw that guy, Gregg Atlas. I remember that guy, Gregg Atlas.

Q. He was also in the lobby?

A. Atlas was the officer from 10 Engine who died.

Q. That's the person that you had the last --

A. That's the guy who talked on the radio.

Q. -- radio contact with him?

A. Yes.

Q. And he said he was approximately --

A. Twenty-three floors ahead of us.

Q. Up on the 40th something floor, right?

A. Yes. So he was way ahead of us. McSweeney was the only guy I saw from 3 Truck, but he just walked

G. GORMAN

by. I didn't really say nothing to him. I'm good friends with him. I didn't see guys who I know around here at 33. I remember seeing 39 Engine going past us at one point when we had the problem with Derek, and I was telling the guys, take your time, take a blow. I remember telling that to the kid. I think they got out. Somebody said to me they were trapped below 6 Truck. I didn't know that story. There's so many it's ridiculous.

Q. There's some good stories that come out of this also, you know, people that wound up being trapped for a little while and then they wound up coming out of it alive.

A. I mean, we got more people out just staying there. Also, while I was there in the lobby, the guy who was looking up when the bodies were jumping, the bodies would jump and you'd hear a huge explosion and you'd see just blood spatter on the windows. It was like gruesome. It was bad.

Anyway, we went down Warren Street and we ran into the guy we saw before, Richie Carletti. I ran into him.

Q. This is later on. This is after you had left the bar.

G. GORMAN

A. Yes.

Q. Exactly. So we know you took a rest over there in the bar area.

A. Right. I was looking for my company and trying to make contact with them.

Q. The lighting had died out early on, like after that first collapse.

A. There was no light.

Q. So on the way down there was no lighting in that stairway at all.

A. No. Only just the reflective black paint, that's it.

Q. Like you say, your flashlight went dead?

A. Yes. Like it always does when you need it.

So I went down Warren Street. I was glad to see Richie. He was going to clean me up, but he said he saw 5 Engine and at that time I thought Manny was all right.

Q. Like you said, the last you knew of him he was carrying oxygen into the building in addition to his roll-up I would imagine?

A. Yes.

Q. Carrying oxygen and an extra cylinder maybe?

A. We were all like frigging pack mules.

G. GORMAN

Q. Like carrying whatever you could at that point.

A. It's like, in hindsight, maybe it wasn't the greatest idea in the world. But when we left the rig, we didn't know the elevator was out.

Q. How we depend on the elevators normally.

A. We're not designed to walk that many floors.

Q. No?

A. I mean, this gear is designed for five stories of walk-up, not 90.

Q. Exactly.

A. What can be designed for 90 stories of walk-up? There should be a policy. I mean, if we've got a 20-story walk-up like we had at the Waterside. We had the Waterside fire in April and the elevators went bad. We made it up there first due, so it was all right for us, but the companies that came behind us had to walk 24 stories and they're shot.

Q. Of course. You're totally exhausted. Your legs start to give out at that point.

A. Not only that. The worst part is, you keep on talking about the weight, but the worst part is you're in a frigging oven. There's nowhere for the heat to go. You'll never run around a block in a coat,

you know?

Q. I know. Our bodies are giving off a lot of heat, you're working, your metabolism is working.

A. That's why there should be like, if there is a huge calamity, there should be some sort of like every other company drop their roll-ups, like lighten the load or something like that, because it's just -- some sort of system because, you know, we do depend on the elevators.

Q. True.

A. If the elevators aren't going, we have no other plan.

Q. Absolutely not.

A. So, I mean, that's what I'm trying to bring up. I don't know who to talk to.

Q. And you knew early on that the elevators were not --

A. I said, oh, shit. It maybe saved my life. It might have saved my life, the elevators being out.

Q. Right. But you knew 10 Engine had said that we're going to have to take the stairs after you teamed up with them.

A. Right. But I think it may have saved my life. We went up there to put a fire out, but then

G. GORMAN

again, who knows, if we put water on it, it would have done anything. You don't know.

Q. You wouldn't have maybe know how close you wouldn't have gotten. I mean, all good intention, but you don't realize how close you would have gotten.

A. We don't know.

Q. All right.

A. Also, then, when I got up on Warren Street --

Q. Up until that point, then, when --

A. I remember going on West Street, I'm hearing calling for 33 Engine on the radio. I thought they were all right. I was shocked.

Q. This is at what point you heard them on the radio?

A. I didn't hear them on the radio. I heard them calling for 33 Engine. I thought they answered, but it wasn't them, when I was on West.

Q. This is, again, later on, after the collapse?

A. Yes.

Q. We're going to concentrate up until that point then.

A. All right. I'm going to tell the whole story.

Q. That's okay.

G. GORMAN

A. I ended up in the hospital twice that day.

Q. No, that's all right. But the thing is we're just trying to get back to the collapse. That's all right.

A. I ended up in the hospital twice, but I never put my name down or nothing.

Q. You were probably in a state of shock of what had happened.

A. That, too. And I felt like I wasn't that hurt, so I thought there'd be so many more people coming and I wanted to get the hell out of the way.

Q. More serious injured.

A. Yes.

Q. Even though you might have been in shock and upset and injured.

A. I didn't want them wasting their time.

Q. No. You would think serious injuries are going to come out of this.

A. Not enough, I guess.

Q. All right. So we'll take this as -- unless there's something else really significant you want to put into this.

A. Also, when I came in that morning, Lieutenant Paul Mitchell was here. He was relieved by

G. GORMAN

Bohack. He was sitting at the door. He was leaving.

Q. He was the officer that worked the night before in 5 Engine?

A. Apparently. I don't know what happened to him.

Q. He was also amongst the missing people?

A. Yes.

Q. He was working here?

A. Right.

Q. He already left, though?

A. I don't know. He was in the midst of leaving when we got the run.

Q. But you had gotten that run before this whole thing.

A. Like 8:30, yes. So I don't know.

Q. All right.

A. I'd just like to make the points like I was just making.

Q. Which is good.

A. The stairways, there weren't enough stairways. I don't know what the hell the papers were talking about, how they were big enough. They say they were more than big enough for regulation. To me that's ridiculous.

G. GORMAN

Q. Not with the amount of people that were in that building, the amount of people that were trying to come down. It was very tight.

A. No.

Q. Actually, you're going up single file --

A. Single file.

Q. -- and they're coming down single file, and it's not continuous; you're pausing as you're going up, right?

A. Yes. It's not like continuous. It's like slow.

Q. And like you say, trying to open up doors, if anybody tried to open up the door --

A. You stopped the flow. That's why there wasn't enough stairs. Then you find out later it was truss construction. Like, oh, shit. I didn't know. See, if there is ever a plane that did that again or anything of that magnitude and we really can't put that fire out and we decide early the only thing we could do is facilitate the self-evacuation, and like any person coming down, if there's one person in the stairs, an old lady, a guy who is a little bit too big or whatever, I'm being politically correct, and they'll clog the whole stairs and it's not even full and it's

G. GORMAN

clogging.

Q. He's hindering other people from coming down.

A. If we somehow just take that guy and move him along or that lady and you just move them along quicker, we are saving more people up there. I mean, on a regular high-rise fire, that's not true. We just go up there, we put the fire out the best way we can. But if we ever have a situation like that, if we just get in there and help the self-evacuation as quick as we can, that would save more lives.

Q. It would make more of an impact.

A. Yes. Even though they say we did and all that.

Q. There probably could have been more people that we could have gotten out of this thing.

A. Yes. I mean, it's not Monday morning quarterbacking, it's learning from it, because it's just something nobody ever dealt with.

Q. No, of course not. You're learning from experience.

A. I just wish, you know, I don't know how they could do this in a liable -- I don't know what goes into this, but it would help. That's my opinion, if

G. GORMAN

anybody wants it.

Q. Well, it's good to mention, right?

A. Yes. I wanted to make sure -- I really didn't want to do the interview, but I wanted to make sure those points got out. What I see in the paper, I heard nothing about evacuation on the radio. Nothing.

Q. I'll tell you, the way the building construction is designed to evacuate only from the floor where the incident is taking place down to a couple floors below where it is, not your entire building is being evacuated, I mean, you're clogging up the stairways to a point where people can't safely make it down, unless -- you know, we're talking about hours here. We're not talking about making it down very quickly.

A. Yes. I could only imagine what happened on the floors below the fire, what clogging went on there.

Q. Right.

A. The building is on fire. You can't do nothing about who's already gone.

Q. No. We have no control over the building.

A. We should. Did you see this? You see this? You open this door, the people in here were stopped, and these guys are pushing --

Q. Trying to make it --

(Interview ends abruptly.)

File No. 9110421

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN AMATO

Interview Date: January 2, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is January 2, '02. The time is 1330 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview today with Firefighter third grade John Amato, Engine 68. We're in the quarters of Engine 68. There's nobody else in this room at this time. The interview concerns the events of September 11th. What follows is the interview.

A. We got the call early that morning to go to 35 Engine. We got down to 35 Engine. We mucked it up with a bunch of other companies. We took some equipment from 35 Engine. Then we got the call to go down to the World Trade Center.

As we were driving down to the World Trade Center -- actually we took a little detour because a couple of -- I think 64 Engine was leading us. We didn't exactly know how to get down there, which delayed us a little bit, thank God.

When we got down there, we parked I'd say maybe 10 blocks, 10 to 12 blocks away from the World Trade Center. We gathered all the

equipment, the rollups, the standpipe kit, and we started walking down the West Side Highway.

As we were walking down -- actually as we were driving down, we heard that the first building had collapsed, which is the south tower?

Q. The south tower collapsed first.

A. The south tower collapsed first. We didn't know what kind of collapse it was. We thought it was a partial collapse. We thought it was maybe two floors pancaking.

At that point we were walking towards the building. We still didn't know it was a total collapse. As we get closer and closer, we notice that the smoke is clearing. We don't see the south tower. Now we're starting to talk to each other, started to actually worry what's in for us next.

As we approached Chambers Street, kept walking, still no one had told us about the total collapse. We get down to about Barclay and Vesey Street, which is a block away from the overpass, the bridge overpass that goes across the West Side Highway.

All you hear is a rumbling in the

street. It sounded like an earthquake. When I was a younger kid, I was in an earthquake and it felt like the same exact feeling. I looked, and I could see the antenna on the top of the roof coming straight down.

We all turned and just threw our rollups down and started running as fast as we could. I took about five steps, I turned back to look behind me, and the debris was on my heels. Guys were just scrambling through the streets. Finally the debris overcame us, and you couldn't see anymore. It was like pitch-black, total darkness.

I kind of ran into a building. I hit the building. One of the gentlemen working in the building I think I see was an engineer pulled me over towards the entrance. I went into the entrance. You couldn't see. It was dark as night.

Finally a few minutes went by, about four or five minutes went by, it started clearing, and we started looking for members of Engine 68 as well as all the other engines that had driven down with us.

We found everyone. We were told to stay at Chambers Street until further notice.

That's about it.

Q. That's about it? So you stayed at Chambers Street?

A. We stayed at Chambers Street. They didn't give us permission to go back in there, since we had already been involved with the collapse.

Q. So you stayed there for some period of time at Chambers, the staging area?

A. The staging area, yeah.

Q. And then from there you left? You took your rig back to 68 at some point?

A. Oh, yeah, I'd say about 11 p.m. that night.

Q. Wow.

A. Yeah, we stayed there the whole day.

Q. The whole day, and they never put you work?

A. No.

Q. Were there a lot of companies at the staging area?

A. There were a lot of companies there.

They just didn't want anyone involved with the immediate collapse back in there. That was their idea. Since we were on paper as one of the companies, they didn't want us to go.

Q. You really didn't interact with any other companies or anything like that? You were walking in, it started to collapse, you ran out, wound up at the staging area eventually, and that's about it.

Is everybody from 68 okay?

A. Yeah.

Q. Everybody came back?

A. Yes. We had minor injuries from running into, not being able to see. We did have some minor injuries, including myself.

CHIEF MALKIN: Okay. It's 1336 hours.

This concludes the interview with Fireman Amato. I thank him for the interview, and that's the end.

File No. 9110422

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PAUL QUINN

Interview Date: January 8, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is January 8th, 2002. The time is 2028 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter first grade Paul Quinn of Engine 55. We're at the quarters of Engine 55. Also Chief O'Donnell from the Safety Battalion is in the room at this time. What follows is the interview.

Q. Can you just start where you were when you got the run.

A. Okay. We were at a box on -- I had my rig parked on Church and Canal Street for I think it was either a gas leak or an odor of gas. I don't know what time that came in. It came in before the run, obviously, for the Trade Center.

I guess the chief was getting ready to let us go, and we heard a big bang. I thought it was -- first, because it was a run for either a gas odor or a leak, that maybe something exploded in the street.

The officer looked out, my officer, and he saw the tower. A couple floors looked like they were all aflame, one floor or whatever. So

the chief told us to go down there. He let I guess all the companies go to the Trade Center.

We got down there. The officer told me -- when we got there, he said, "Help 7 Engine stretch to the standpipe. See if you can find a hydrant. See if you can get water." So I did that. I started to help 7 Engine's chauffeur. I put my bunker gear on and stuff.

I looked up, and somebody said there was an airplane. So I thought, okay, it was a small Cessna or something like that that hit the building. I'm looking up and I say, okay, there's a lot of fire, but it's vented. There's going to be a couple of hose lines we're going to need to do this.

So I helped 7 Engine. There was a guy in the street, and there was a civilian with him and another fireman. We put him in a stokes basket and brought him over to an ambulance on the southbound side of West Street, brought him over the median and put him in an ambulance.

I went back to work. I was helping him and stretching lines. My time frame is all off. I can't put anything into chronological order.

Q. Okay.

A. I got a line to my rig to 10 Engine, then hooked up into one of the buildings, and just the bodies were falling. It was a mess. Guys were coming off rigs.

As I said, companies were coming in. I can't tell you what companies. I know I saw -- guys were taking masks. The guys were coming in. Extra guys were coming in off the rigs, coming in more than they were assigned with. They were getting masks from different rigs, I guess. One of the guys took one of the masks and the other guy got another mask from the rig.

Q. Listen, this is not mandatory. If this is too difficult, just tell me. I'm not here to question you at all.

A. Yeah, I know.

Q. You don't have to do this. You can decline this. I'm not ordering you to do this.

A. Yeah.

Q. I feel for your position. If you find it too difficult, just tell me and we'll stop and we'll just call it a day. You don't have to do this.

A. Yeah, I know, I know.

You're asking me what units showed up.

Q. If you remember.

A. I think that I saw 5 Truck. I'm not sure. I think I remember seeing one of the guys. I said, "Do you have a mask?" Now I'm looking for masks and stuff like this.

I was by the rig, and somebody said the building's starting to come down, take off. So I started to run, and the north overpass, the pedestrian, I was kind of like there, and I got behind that or in front of one of the rigs. I was either going to go underneath it or -- I got, I guess, near the front grill, the front bumper.

I stayed there until the -- it felt like a damn tornado. It was black for a long time. I was near the median, so I kind of made my way north. I had the dust and the soot and swallowing the debris, whatever you want to call it. My eyes hurt bad. My eyes were bad. I felt like I was closing them on sand paper, kind of.

Then the other guy, Bobby, caught me. He kind of saw me. Made it to another ambulance and they gave me oxygen and I guess water and

stuff like that. Then they told us we had to evacuate that because the second building was going to come down.

So I got out of there and I'm walking around. I'm trying to find -- I went one way -- I don't know where this ambulance was. I get out of there. It was a M.E.R.V. It had a ramp. You didn't step up on it. So I get out of there, and I'm walking around, "Where should we go?" or something like that. So somebody said, "No, go this way." So they pushed, and I guess I just followed the rest of the crowd or whatever. The second tower started to come down, I guess the north tower at that time.

We made it into a construction booth, a construction trailer. Again it turned dark. It turned black. I was going to go behind that. But I was kind of like in the middle of a crowd with a bunch of cops and firemen. I made it into this construction trailer, and I looked out the window. Again, it was black.

I tell you, my time and the sequence is all off. I went up to where the command post -- I was going to go outside and see if I could do

anything, but my eyes, they were hurting, they were burning. So every time I'd go out -- I'm useless if I try to go out and do something here. So I guess after a while -- my time is all off.

I made it up to the command post, and I saw somebody. I started losing it. I eventually made it to Beekman Downtown Hospital, and my brother found me. Later on that afternoon we came back here.

Q. Your brother's name is John?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. That's good?

CHIEF MALKIN: This concludes the interview with Firefighter Paul Quinn. The time is now 2036 hours.

File No. 9110423

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ROBERT SIRAGUSA

Interview Date: January 8, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is January 8th, 2002. The time is 2041 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview at this time with Fireman First Grade Robert Siragusa, Engine Company 55. We're in the office of Engine 55. Also in the room is Chief O'Donnell from the Safety Battalion. What follows is the interview.

A. I was at the firehouse approximately 8:15 that morning. We were waiting for the company to return to quarters. They were out on a run previous before we got in. Then as we were waiting -- actually from the television we found out that a plane had hit the Trade Center.

We then proceeded probably a little after 9 -- yeah, I guess it was around 9:15. We knew obviously the company wasn't coming back any time soon. So I and two members from the night crew that worked the previous night that were relieved already decided we were going to get in one of the private cars and go down to the site.

As we were proceeding to the site, we had word on the news, on the car radio, that a

second plane had hit the Trade Center en route. We found out that that had happened. We approximately arrived at the Trade Center complex about five minutes after the second plane had hit.

At this time we had had our bunker gear with us, and we had proceeded to the command post on West Street, which we mainly remained there for most of the next 20 minutes. We had debated on whether we should go into the building and help out, look for our company, but we decided probably not to because we had no SCPA, we had no gear, we had no radios and nobody would know where we were if we got lost or split up.

So we basically stayed in the street, thinking that sooner or later we would get up there to relieve or help the company, whoever needed help.

We did help stretch some lines in front of the building with the engine companies, helping the chauffeurs in the street. As we did, debris was flying out the windows. Bodies were flying out the windows. It was getting pretty bad in front of the building.

A couple minutes later one of the chiefs on the scene -- I don't remember who it was -- ordered all personnel in the street to remove themselves across West Street, which is basically where we stood on West Street directly across from One World Trade Center for the next couple of minutes, watching the insanity.

Probably a couple minutes after that I think -- what time did the first building come down? I don't even remember. Whatever it was, 9:20 or 9:40 or something.

Q. 9:55 south tower collapses, 9:55.

A. That was the first one. Okay.

So then we basically remained at the command post along with a lot of other firemen.

Q. At the time that the south tower came down, you guys stayed there? Were you enveloped in the cloud?

A. Actually as we heard a radio transmission of "Collapse, collapse, collapse," that's when everybody just went their own way. I looked up and I saw the top couple of floors starting to come down. So I took off into the building directly across from the World Trade

Center, which was --

Q. On the west side of West Street?

A. West side of West Street, which was probably the World Financial Center, it was called. We ran in there, a few of us, about 10, 12 guys. We ran into the building, ran about 50 yards to the rear of the building and dove behind a wall. Then we heard the tremendous roar and collapse of the first tower coming down.

We were pretty much safe from the dust cloud because most of the windows stayed intact. Only a few windows broke. So we pretty much survived that pretty well.

Immediately after the building came down, we then came back out to the front of the building in front of West Street and saw the collapse.

At that time there was a couple of guys really in bad shape in front of the building, guys that probably didn't get far enough away, that were kind of staggering in front of the building.

So what I did is I just grabbed a few of those guys. As a matter of fact, two of them,

the chauffeur from 24 Engine and the chauffeur from 55, who was working the night tour, who I was supposed to relieve on the day tour, they were in pretty bad shape.

They were pretty much in shock. They didn't know what happened. They were incoherent. I kind of just walked them a few blocks north to an ambulance to get them checked out, because I didn't know if they were hurt seriously or not.

After I made sure they were okay, got them in the ambulance, I proceeded back down West Street to the front of the Trade Center. There were numerous burning materials. There were car fires. We proceeded to try to extinguish some of them, but there was a big problem with the water. There was very low water pressure. We did have a problem with that, but we did the best we could trying to extinguish the perimeter fires all around the area.

Like I said, some guys did go back right into the collapse area, but I stayed back and did that. As we were doing that, 30 seconds, 30 minutes later, whatever it was, there was another transmission, probably a last-minute

thing. I heard, "Collapse, collapse" again. This time the north tower started to fall.

I took off running again. This time I ran west down towards the water on Vesey Street, and this time we wound up in the park over there by Battery City, I believe it is, or by the waterfront, as the second tower collapsed. The second time it was down and was really insane. There was a lot of firemen down at that end.

Everybody was kind of pretty much in shock at that time. We didn't know what the hell was going on or what to do. So we regrouped with a bunch of firemen. With a bunch of guys we regrouped. We just came back to the front of the building again. This time it was a bigger mess than it was the first time.

A lot of the guys just went right to work after that. They just got right back in that rubble, started looking for people. Some guys just kind of retreated and just sat down and they were in shock, just gave up and just sat there. Some guys were just walking around in a daze.

Q. They didn't believe it.

Were they pulling people off the pile?
Did you see any of that?

A. Not much, no.

Q. After a collapse there's supposed to be
surface victims.

A. Right.

Q. But it doesn't seem like there were any
surface victims.

A. No, the only surface victims, as you
know, were probably Ladder Company 6 and one or
two other people, I think. But that was
basically it. Everybody was pretty much buried
in there.

It was just an eerie silence after
that. It was an eerie silence, no radio
transmissions, nothing. All you heard was Ladder
6 giving their mayday. Everybody kind of
centered their attention on getting those guys
out.

That's what we basically did. We
continued to put out the perimeter fires.

Q. At some point did somebody take charge?
Were there any chiefs around or any officers that
said, okay, we're going to break into teams? Did

you get any sense of that?

A. Everybody was so widely scattered. I think Chief Blaich is probably the only guy I really heard on the radio try to get something going, yeah. Basically, as I said, the first concern was to find Ladder 6. He kind of organized everybody, let's find out where they are, let's try to get them out.

They were in the south tower, the second stairwell. Nobody knew exactly where that was, because there was nothing left.

Q. So Blaich was sending teams of guys to go try to find Ladder 6 in whatever stairwell?

A. Right, right. They were trying to get into the rubble area.

Then basically after that the fire boats came in, because we had no water. So basically most of the day and the next couple of hours I was stretching line from the fire boat. I teamed up with a bunch of guys getting water from the fire boat in front of the Trade Center.

Basically that's what I was doing for the rest of the day, just stretching a couple lines back and forth, from out here, stretching

up Vesey in front of the building to the manifolds.

That was basically what the day was about. I don't know if I can get into any detail than that.

Q. That's okay.

How did you finish up the day? You worked there until 10:00 at night, you said?

A. Just about 9:00, when I teamed up with my company. We finally teamed up, because there was only three of us there. Basically after that we kind after ran into each other about 8:30, 9, and went back to the firehouse about 10.

But the guy you just interviewed, Paul, he was really in front of the building. He was the chauffeur that day.

Q. Yeah, he was saying.

A. He really got in there. He walked out without a scratch. I think he dove under one of the pedestrian bridges here. He's a lucky man.

Q. He told me.

A. Yeah, yeah, he was a lucky man.

Basically that's what the day was all about. Do you have any other questions?

Q. I'm trying to think.

How long would you say, like, the first building collapses until it cleared up, until you could see what the lay of the land was?

A. But most of the dust cloud went north and south, for some reason. Not much came west, for some reason -- I don't know -- because the buildings were there. They had the big tall buildings across from West Street. But most of the dust went, like I said, north and south.

So where I was, it cleared up pretty quickly. But to tell you how long it took to clear, I would say it was pretty quick, minutes.

Q. Minutes?

A. Minutes, I think.

Q. And some guys jumped on the pile. They had an instinct or the wherewithal to try to jump on the pile.

A. I believe some of them, yes. Some guys did jump up on the pile, jumped onto the mezzanine in front of the World Trade Center. There was like a mezzanine. Other guys went up there to look around. They had a tower ladder right there.

Q. Was there a lot of fire in the Trade Center collapse area and stuff at this time?

A. No. Basically there was a fire -- in the part of the Trade Center that was standing, the mezzanine area -- one of the towers? It must have been. There was like about six or seven stories left. I don't know if that was -- was it Eight World Trade, maybe?

Q. Yes.

A. I think it was Eight World Trade, which --

Q. That was burning; right?

A. That was burning.

Q. That's what caused the fire in that.

A. That was definitely burning. There was a lot of perimeter fires, rubbish and cars.

Q. Cars, yeah.

A. And of course there was smoke coming out but no active flame, not that I noticed anyhow. I don't remember.

Q. Okay. About it?

A. That's about it.

Q. Good. Okay.

CHIEF MALKIN: This concludes the

interview. I thank Firefighter Siragusa for
the interview. The time is now 2053 hours

File No. 9110424

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PETE METZGER

Interview Date: January 8, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF MALKIN: Today's date is January 8th, 2002. The time is 2058 hours. This is Battalion Chief Malkin of the Safety Battalion. I'm conducting an interview with Pete Metzger, fireman fourth, Engine 55, regarding the events of September 11th. Also in the room is Battalion Chief O'Donnell of the Safety Battalion. What follows now is the interview with Fireman Metzger.

A. On the morning of September 11th I got relieved about 8:30. Engine 55 had a run for a gas leak on the west side. From there 55 went to the towers. Me, Pat Schuppel and Fireman Siragusa made our way to the World Trade Center after the second plane hit the towers.

55 was parked in front of the north tower. I went there and grabbed my helmet, which I left on the rig. An older chief kind of motioned us all across the street on the west side, West Street, to the command post, where we waited and tried to get into the building.

We were there probably 15 minutes before the first one came down. As it came down,

we all went underneath the building right there. I'm not sure what building it was. It might be --

Q. It's on the west side of West Street, the building?

A. On West Street. I guess it was the Merrill Lynch building. I think it was probably the Merrill Lynch building has an underground parking garage. Everyone that was at the command post went under that.

I came back, searched that area, the underground parking garage, went up, saw a little of the command post. I was with a captain. I don't know who it was. He said, "Let's go on out the back." As we made our way out the back, which is in the little green area near the harbor --

Q. Right.

A. -- the second tower came down.

I hooked up with Pat Schuppel, who I started with. Probably for a couple minutes we hustled. We just regrouped back there on the water. Then we went back to the towers, where we started putting out car fires and whatnot.

Some guys needed help up on the promenade deck, the second floor of I guess it's the customs building or one of these buildings, on the corner of Vesey and West. So I went up there and started helping this Squad 288. I carried out a couple bodies or at least one body that I remember. I think it was a captain.

I worked up there a little bit, came on down.

Q. The guy you carried out was a captain?

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you know what happened to him; do you know?

A. I don't know. His injuries were not conclusive. He was kind of intact.

Q. He was out in the street?

A. No. He was up on that second level of the building on the corner of Vesey and West. I guess it was Six World Trade, probably the customs building, but I'm not sure of that.

We kind of worked up there a bit. We came on down. We went up to Barclay street, went north and west, made a right on Barclay, down Church. From there I saw a member of 55 Engine

that was hooked up with another local company.

I said good-bye to the squad buddies. From there we searched a big old hotel that was on I guess Trinity, the Millennium Hotel. We searched all the rooms in that place, found nothing. We came on down. It took a while.

About that time --

Q. How did you get into the rooms?

A. There were a couple companies working together, and the first couple doors we popped. Then someone found the maid's keys. They found two maids' keys, master keys, and we swiped.

Q. Who was working in there with you; do you know?

A. Who was working in there?

Q. Just off the top of your head, if you can remember.

A. There was a local company. It might have been Engine 15 or 18. The captain was there. I'm not sure if his boys were there. Then there was a Brooklyn company. I'm not sure who that was.

Q. Okay.

A. There was a bunch of us, and the

officers had the keys and they would open the doors, and we would all go in and search them. All the rooms were immaculate. The first or second floors were dusty. Everything else was fine. So we did that for a while, you know, 50 stories.

We came on down. From there, I think that's when seven was going to come down. So they backed everybody out, somewhere near Church and Trinity, I guess. I remember being near the cemetery, and there's an old Church building up there. I'm not exactly sure where we were. But we were up in the Church, Park, Murray, Barclay, this area.

So we sat there for a while. Seven World Trade came down. After that came down, we all kind of regrouped. I think we started to stretch a tower ladder down Vesey Street towards Seven World. This was kind of late at night. Maybe this was 8 or 9.

I saw 55 Engine, so I abandoned that stat ship, me and the other 55 guy, hopped on with our 55 gang, and we kind of did a little cruise around the Trade Center area, did a little

digging in the north tower, and then we came home
by 12 or 1 or 2.

Yeah, that was that.

Q. That was it?

A. Yeah.

CHIEF MALKIN: This concludes the
interview with Firefighter Pete Metzger of
Engine 55. The time is now 2103 hours.

File No. 9110426

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER NICHOLAS BORRILLO

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 9, 2002. The time is 1300 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Division of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual --

FIREFIGHTER BORRILLO: Firefighter Nicholas Borrillo, first grade, Ladder 1.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We are at the quarters of Ladder 1, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Go ahead, Nick. Tell your story.

A. We were at a box for odor of gas in the street on Church and Lispenard. We were investigating that. We were just about ready to take up from that box and come back when we heard the roar of the engines of the plane. Before we knew it, it was overhead. Within two seconds it hit the north tower.

We all jumped on the rig. It was Ladder 1, Engine 7, Battalion 1, Ladder 8, Engine 55, if I'm not mistaken. We headed down Canal Street to the west side. Then we headed town to

the Trade Center. We pulled up in front of the Trade Center on West Street on the east side right in front of the building. There's a bus stop right in front of the building. We were right there.

We got off the rig. We kind of gathered ourselves a little bit, discussed what we were going to do.

Q. Where did you park the rig?

A. The rig was parked on West Street facing north, right in front of the building. As I said, there was a bus stop that was right there. We parked a little bit north of the bus stop, probably by that big overhang.

Q. Okay. Right at the bridge that goes across West Street.

A. After that.

Q. It's not after that?

A. There was a big overhang when you walk into the tower. There's an overhang on that part of the building.

We went to the fire command station. We waited for some orders. Chief Pfeifer was in charge of the fire at that time. We were trying

to find out if we were going to get our Port Authority radio that we normally get. Those never came.

We tried to get information about the elevators. That took a little bit of time. I don't know how long it might have taken, but before we actually knew that, we didn't have any elevators and they said start making your way up.

We started going up. We went to the B staircase. There were lots of civilians coming down that particular staircase. It was a few minutes even before we were able to clear out enough space where we could see to start going up.

Maybe on the second floor I thought I heard a little bit of an explosion or something. Later on we found out that there was a -- there was a Port Authority guy on the staircase in our vicinity. He confirmed that another plane had hit the other tower.

We still kept going up. It was a slow go going up. It was really congested. We were single file going up. The civilians were single file coming down. We were just telling people

just to stay calm, just get out of the building,
the best way you can.

We were getting a little separated from
each other. We tried to just keep with each
other, just in case there was anything -- we
didn't want to have to look for anyone on the way
out.

A couple guys were behind us, so we had
to stop maybe two times as we were going up. We
climbed up to the 23rd floor. We were waiting
for a couple of our guys to come up. They
finally hooked up with us, and we took a break.
There was a water display thing like for sodas
and everything. We got into that, because we
were just overheating. We took, I don't know, a
five-minute break there.

Then we heard a rumble. We heard it
and we felt the whole building shake. It was
like being on a train, being in an earthquake. A
train is more like it, because with the train you
hear the rumbling, and it kind of like moved you
around in the hall. Then it just stopped after
eight or ten seconds, about the time it took for
the building to come down.

We just kind of looked at each other like what the hell was that? Then it stopped. I had left my mask, my helmet, my jacket down the hallway. I said, no, I might need that, let me go back and get it. I ran back and got that. A couple minutes later, not that I heard on my radio. I didn't hear the evacuation order over my radio, but there was a chief from the 11th Division, I believe, Picciotto.

Q. From the 11th Battalion.

A. The 11th Battalion.

He was probably coming down from like 30 or something like that. He was telling everybody directly to leave the building. So we got our stuff, we started going down. There were still civilians in the staircase. We probably got to the civilians around the 10th floor. So we kind of slowed down a little bit. We didn't want to panic them.

We really didn't know what was going on. We didn't know the whole building fell down. We just didn't know that. Maybe if we did, maybe we would have made it a little more urgent. It was really pretty calm in the staircase. Nobody

was yelling or screaming. The civilians were fine.

We got down. I don't know how long it took us to get down, maybe 20 minutes. About that time we came down, we got down to the lobby, walked towards West Street. We figured we would go back to the fire command station. There was nobody at that fire command station.

I waited for one of the other guys, Steve Olsen, to come down. He was about two minutes behind me. We walked down to the West Street side where our rig was. As I said before, I spoke to him for 10 or 15 seconds. We were looking up at the building. We were like, how are we going to fight this one? Let's regroup and walk north. I said, "Joe, are you coming with us?" He said, "I'll be right there."

Me and Steve got to about -- walking north on West, we got to maybe half a block to a block north of Vesey when the north tower fell. We just hauled. We were running. There were a bunch us running. I actually got up around two blocks.

The dust cloud was right behind me. It

overcame me a little bit. I got up to Stuyvesant High School. I ducked into the school, rested there for two or three minutes, came back outside, walked on the sidewalk back down. I didn't know where Steve Olsen was, and I didn't know -- (inaudible).

I asked where they were. Everybody else was with him. He said everybody else was with him, the officer and three other members. We sat up a rendezvous point. I think it was Harrison Street, maybe, Harrison and West. We kind of regrouped right there.

After that we scattered up and got back to the firehouse. We had no masks. Some guys didn't have their coat on. Some guys didn't have their helmet. We said, let's go back to the firehouse, let's get our second gear and then we'll get back down to the Trade Center. We had no tanks or anything.

That's it.

File No. 9110428

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ALBERT BARRY

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The time is 1200 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of New York. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

FIREFIGHTER BARRY: Firefighter Albert Barry, Engine 65, third grade.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The interview is being conducted at the quarters of Engine 65, and it's regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Okay, Al, do you want to give your story?

A. Okay. We got the call at 9 a.m., third due on the fifth alarm. We rolled up to West Street and Vesey where our chauffeur let us off. We grabbed the rollups, an extra bottle, and proceeded to the north tower and entered the lobby area through a broken window.

I believe we went up the A stairwell. It was pretty congested with civilians coming down. We kept telling the civilians to stay to the right, we're moving up to the left. We made it to about the 16th floor when the south tower

collapsed.

We did not know that. This is all hindsight, of course. The only thing that I can recall that happened was there was a big whoosh of air that pushed from the south up to the north. The building moved a little bit, nothing out of the ordinary, I guess.

From there we made it to about the 20th floor when we heard a radio signal for a mayday to remove ourselves from there, the building was in eminent collapse. On our way down, the stairwell was pretty much fluid. We were sharing air with civilians.

Nobody that we came down with was injured in any way just some civilian was hyperventilating. There was, I recall, an older woman that was being carried down by some civilians in a chair. We told the civilians to put her down and we immediately took command of her, checked her vitals, and she was all right.

I helped carry her down a little bit. Then we passed her along to some other civilians who carried her down some more. It was a quicker pace because people were making room for her to

come down.

I guess we got to about maybe the fifth floor, and the power was out. There was a bit of a smoky condition at that point. But everybody continued down. Nobody was running. It was very calm.

Once we made it to the lobby, (inaudible) seemed to be a triage set up in the lobby area. Our lieutenant said there's no need for us to be in here, let's make our way out the way we came in, and that's what we did. Once we came out the window, there was debris all over the place.

I've been told that Chief Al Turi was directing everybody to move north. He was screaming at the top of his lungs, "Go north!" with a megaphone in his hand, he wasn't even using the megaphone.

We took a few steps out, turned around, and the north tower was coming down. It was coming down on our back. That's when we just started running up, and at that point 65 Engine got separated.

I made it through the smoke, through

the debris, once everything cleared. Being that 65 Engine was separated, once we made it up to Stuyvesant High School, that's when everybody was pulled back together. 65 Engine was brought together again.

That's about it, the long and short of it.

Q. Okay. I just have a couple questions.

A. Go ahead.

Q. Did they give you a specific task? In other words, when you came in, did they tell you to go to the 30th floor or the 50th floor?

A. Yes, there was a chief, I guess it was at the staging area. There was basically just one chief standing there saying, "All right, you guys make your way up to the north tower." I don't know --

Q. He didn't tell you to go to the 30th floor or the 50th floor?

A. No. He just said make your way up to the north tower. That was it. We got our rollups and gear and everything else and that's it. That's about it, then.

File No. 9110429

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEVEN ROGERS

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 9, 2002. The time is 2050 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER ROGERS: Firefighter Steve Rogers, Ladder 1.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York. We're doing this interview at the location of Ladder 1's quarters regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Steve, if you would just tell us what happened that day.

A. On September 11th I was on Staten Island. I heard it on my car radio that the World Trade Center was hit by a plane. Immediately began making my way into the city. I got there rather quickly. On the way here I heard the second plane had hit. Right before I got in my truck, they said that the top of tower two had collapsed.

I entered the firehouse here, Ladder 1, and began to put on my gear, get on my gear that I would need. I met two other firefighters, Kirk Pritchard and John McConnachie from this house, Ladder 1. We all suited up.

Before we left, the lieutenant that was here wanted to set up a triage center at the firehouse for the injured civilians that were in the street, so we pulled up all the equipment from the basement, all the C.F.R.D. equipment, stokes baskets, all the stuff he thought we would need.

There was a couple doctors available from across the street that came in. At that point we left them here to run a triage center, the lieutenant and the doctors. We jumped in my truck, the three of us. Actually there was a film maker there, a French film maker that was filming that day.

We proceeded to go down Church Street the wrong way with my truck. At this point I believe there was a lot of debris on the street a lot of dust and papers from the collapses of Two. As we made the turn, we passed the mayor and the

police commissioner. We told them a triage center was at the firehouse. If they needed to go to the triage center. They said thank you, and we continued down the street further.

I parked my truck approximately on the corner of Warren and Church and got out and suited up and continued walking down Church Street towards Vesey, where we had seen multiple civilians injured and hurt but ambulatory. They were walking. We directed them to ambulances that were parked on Church Street, and we continued down.

We made a right on Vesey going towards West Street. At that point I saw a guy from 4 Engine, Bob Humphreys, and I asked him what kind of equipment he had in his rig, masks and stuff. He said his was already stripped.

So we continued to work our way down Vesey. Each rig we came across we stopped and checked for masks and tools that we needed. We continued down towards West Street. When we got to the corner of West and Vesey, tower one began to collapse. We ran wherever we could. I ran north by the corner of Vesey, and I was already

getting hit with stuff.

The other fellow, other firefighter, John McConnachie, went the same direction I went; the other firefighters didn't. They stayed close to the building, which was World Trade Center Six. We were basically getting hit with all kinds of stuff. (Inaudible), black, dark.

Then we just tried to get our bearings. It was a good -- it felt like an hour but probably 10 minutes, 15 minutes of darkness. We heard people yelling for help. It took us a while before we could get our bearings and find each other after it cleared up to where we could work our way back to (inaudible).

I found one guy, John McConnachie. The other firefighter, Pritchard, they were putting in an ambulance. He was hit in the back with something. He might have a fractured back.

At that point it was very quiet. There was only like two or three of us there. There was no one around, no injured people. The rigs were on fire. There were people coming up one at a time (inaudible) it was going to come. A fireman here, a fireman there, a police officer.

I understand they were working on the mezzanine of six. There was a five-story, four-story mezzanine level, and ^ INAUDIBLE. I believe a fireman from Ladder 1, John, we found. We got 12 Truck -- we moved 12 Truck into position to set up the tower to bring people down.

We had help from Engine 1. That was the engine that had the stokes that we brought down with the tower ladder. We operated back and forth with the tower ladder for a half hour or so.

At that point there were a lot of firemen that started to come, older firemen, and from the recall. I got relieved by another chauffeur. I forget what company; maybe from 12 Truck. We came back and we were going to try to put some fires out because there were fires burning. Rigs were burning, underneath the rigs. We checked for engines that were operational, hydrants. We did that for about another hour or two.

Then I was feeling shitty, so I came back to the firehouse. I went to St. Vincent's

probably around 3:00. I had a cut on my hand and trouble breathing.

Q. You know what I wanted to ask you, did you see anything, Stevie? Like when you got there, did you look at the buildings at all? Was there cracking? Was there an indication that it was going to come down before it came down?

A. I honestly -- I don't remember. I really didn't see it. Number two was totally collapsed. When I looked up, all I saw was a lot of smoke from the fires and stuff. So you really couldn't see the top of the buildings very well. (Inaudible) from the jumpers. I really couldn't see structurally how it collapsed. There was just too much fire and smoke.

Q. How did you know it was collapsing? Did you hear the noise?

A. The noise immediately -- as soon as I heard it, we knew it was coming down. It wasn't like, oh, what the hell is that? It was like a noise you never hear in your whole life. It came down. I only ran like five feet when I got hit with stuff. I had to cover up. It wasn't like you could run three blocks before you were hit

with stuff. It was a matter of feet. There was debris everywhere.

Basically we could have definitely gotten killed because it was all around us.

Q. You know what I think that I found is that guys that were like on the corner of the building got less stuff on them than guys were like --

A. Directly in front.

Q. Yeah, directly in front and on the sides. It seemed like the corner kind of --

A. Kept it --

Q. It went four ways but it didn't come towards the corner, which is something you always expect from a collapse. But that really seems to have been -- the command post was right across West Street, and that got buried.

A. Right. It was directly across.

Q. So you figured that side went that way; this one went this way. But if you were in this area here, a lot of guys seemed to have made it out.

A. Well, you saw the chit; right? The chief that gave the original alarm, the third

alarm, was inside. The third alarm said report to West and Vesey to the staging area. If they had made that the command post, that would have been -- everybody at the command post would have been gone.

Q. Right.

A. That's where I was.

Q. Probably what they did, I think, was they may have moved it down when the second tower was hit. Maybe they started out there. Then when the second tower was hit, they may have moved here.

A. They had the one inside the building and the one --

Q. They needed one outside.

A. When it collapsed, they moved it to the opposite building, and then they got hit with the second collapse. They survived one collapse, and then they got it.

You're lucky. I'm been on the job 16 years. Every time you've got a tower job, and the chiefs are looking. They say move it out of the way. They set their command post up at around 10 o'clock.

Q. The area of the collapse zone would have been to Canal Street. Right. If it would have come down the way we expected it to come down, God knows how many people would have been killed.

A. We were in the collapse zone.

Q. We're probably lucky that it came down the way it came down.

A. Oh, yeah, definitely.

File No. 9110430

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOSEPH CASALIGGI

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's is January 9th, 2002. The time is 1430 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER CASALIGGI: Joseph Cassaliggi, firefighter third grade, Engine 7.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Who is assigned to the New York City Fire Department. We're conducting an interview at the quarters of Engine 7 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Joe, if you would please state what happened.

A. On the morning of September 11th we were operating a box up on Church Street Near Canal. There was an odor of gas in the area. While we were out operating, we heard the first plane coming in. I turned around and I watched the plane crash into the north tower.

I got back on the rig. We raced down

there. We were actually one of the first companies on the scene. We pulled up right in front of One World Trade Center, right into the cul-de-sac right in front of the canopy.

So we got off the rig. I noticed there were several people sitting in the grass in front of the building burned head to toe, gray, just staring at us. The captain ordered us to grab four rollups. We went into the building. We went into the lobby.

The lobby actually looked like the plane hit the lobby. From what I understand, I was told afterwards, that a fireball shot down the elevator shaft and blew out all the windows in the lobby and blew out the elevator doors.

We searched for an elevator to see if there was one operating. There was none. The captain said we were going to walk up the stairs. At that point my mask had started leaking air from the high pressure coupling, and I had to go out and change my cylinder.

I left my rollup and my standpipe kit in the lobby. I went outside to the rig, changed the cylinder. While I was changing the cylinder,

I was keeping an eye because the chauffeur was hooking up to the standpipe. I was keeping an eye, making sure he didn't get hit with anything.

It was at that time when I saw the second plane hit the building. I called a mayday. I told them the second plane hit the south tower of the building. I wasn't sure which floors it was, but I knew it hit the upper floors of the south tower.

Debris was falling, body parts were falling. We ducked for cover inside Engine 7, but the rig was getting bombarded with debris from the building, debris from the plane. We saw bodies crash landing right next to the rig. So we couldn't stay there.

We abandoned Engine 7, and we headed north. We couldn't make it back into the building at that point. We headed north. We got up to Vesey Street. We stayed on Vesey for a little while. Another firefighter had come over asking us if we had a radio. So the Engine 7 chauffeur gave him his radio, and I was control so I had mine.

I radioed the Engine 7 captain, did he

want me to stay with the chauffeur or did he want me to meet him in the building, because the Engine 7 chauffeur didn't have a radio. His response came in broken up. I thought he said give him my radio and meet him on the 15th floor. I found out later he said don't give him the radio and meet him on the 15th floor.

So I gave the chauffeur my radio, and I went into the building. I saw Chief Pfeifer. I told him, "I don't have a radio. I'm going up to meet Engine 7 on the 15th floor." He told me I wasn't going up if I didn't have a radio and I didn't have a partner.

I stayed in the lobby. I didn't know at that point if he was getting me a partner or if he was getting -- I thought I was going to stay there, I wasn't going up. I didn't know what I was doing at that point.

So I stayed around, waiting to be told what to do. I was in the lobby for about 40 minutes. Finally I took Chief Pfeifer aside again and I said, "Chief, if you're not going to send me up, I'm going to go out by the rig and I'm going to help the chauffeur." He told me a

good idea, go out and stay with the chauffeur.

I stood by the blown out windows. I was looking for clearance, trying to get somebody's attention to tell me that I wasn't going to get hit with something as I was running out. I couldn't get anybody's attention in the street.

I saw another body crash down through the canopy. At that I just said screw this and I just ran. I ran to the street, just hoping I wasn't getting hit.

I met up with the Engine 7 chauffeur. We stayed together at least for a few minutes more. They were trying to clear the area. So we were getting pushed back up to Vesey. I think we got as far as almost Barclay.

As I was leaving the building, I heard them at the command post talking about moving the command post to the other side of West Street. I suggested to the chauffeur we make our way back to the command post, let somebody know who we are and where we are and that we're okay.

So we started making our way back. When we were about -- we were on the opposite

side of West Street now on the west side, making our way down. As we were standing underneath the foot bridge that connects Three World Financial Center to the World Trade Center. We were standing under there, and we watched -- throughout the whole time being outside, we must have watched 50, 60 people jump.

I was watching one guy hang onto the outside of the building, the outside of the north tower while I was standing under the bridge. Then there were police officers talking about a third plane coming into the area.

Then a few minutes passed. I was standing under the bridge. We had heard a loud rumble, and people just started running in our direction from the Trade Center toward us. I never even looked up. We just turned around and started running. It was me, the chauffeur, and there were two plain clothes cops running next to us.

We just started running for the Financial Center. I saw a Fire Department lieutenant in the Financial Center. He was holding the door open for us. He yelled to us to

get down, we weren't going to make. I guess I don't know what I was running from.

We grabbed the two cops, threw them on the ground behind one of the support columns for the pedestrian bridge and just dove on top of them. We got hit with the debris from the building. It felt like I got hit by a car. It knocked the wind out of me.

Gasping for air, I got a mouth full of dirt. I spit that out. I gasped again and got another mouthful of dirt. My mask was on. I had it turned on. My face piece was swinging behind me. It was an effort to reach back to grab my face piece. I held it up to my face and purged it.

After that I got a little bit of air from that. I couldn't even give any of it to the chauffeur or to the two cops. I just kind of held it in front of my face.

Everything just got deadly silent. I opened my eyes, I couldn't see a thing. I leaned up. I kind of sat up, so I knew I wasn't pinned under anything. I didn't know what happened. I thought a plane hit the Financial Center and part

of the building came down. I really didn't know what happened at this point.

I sat up, and I thought to myself, okay, I'm not pinned. We're just underneath something and they have to find us. I made sure the other three guys that were with me were okay. The officer that had seen us duck yelled to us, "Is everybody okay?" We yelled back, "Yeah. How do we get out of here?" He came in and got us, took us out through the back of the Financial Center.

At that point somebody handed me a bottle of water, gave me some oxygen. My chest was killing me. I was having difficulty breathing. I found an ambulance, got into an ambulance. They were going to take me to the hospital.

We tried radioing Engine 7. We couldn't get them on the radio. We weren't getting any transmissions on the radio at that point. We couldn't hear anything. So we didn't know what happened. We tried raising Engine 7. Nothing.

I got into an ambulance. I told the

chauffeur I was going the hospital. I suggested he come with me, but he stayed. We got separated at that point. I was in the ambulance. We got a few blocks, and the ambulance got stuck in gridlock. We sat there for a few minutes.

Finally the driver of the ambulance turned around in this little window and just yelled to the back and told everybody to get out and start running. I popped open the back door of the ambulance, and there was a crowd of people running in the direction the ambulance was facing.

I jumped out, and I just ran with the pack. I didn't know where I was running. We ended up by the water a block north of Chambers, at Stuyvesant High School and the elementary school there. I ended up by the water. Then everything calmed down again.

I figured, okay, let me figure out where I am. Now I have no radio. I have to figure out where I am, where I've got to be, just get my bearings. So I looked up, because when you're in downtown Manhattan and need to get your bearings you look for the Trade Center.

I looked up and I'm looking around and saying where am I, but I can't even see the towers. I didn't know what happened at this point. A person was walking past me talking to somebody else. I just overheard him say, "I can't believe they fell."

As he was saying that, I'm looking at the spot where the towers should have been, and I realized I saw the outlines of the other buildings. That's when I realized and I thought everybody in my company was dead. I'm the only one. I don't know where the chauffeur is, but we're the only ones that made it.

I wandered around West Street for a while trying to find a radio. I was jumping in rigs and trying to find a fireman, and I couldn't find anybody. Finally I found a fireman from I think it was Engine 5. He said he thought he had a heart attack and had just came out. He was sitting on the curb. He didn't have a radio either. I figured the two of us will stay together, and we'll find an ambulance, we'll get to the hospital.

I must have passed 50 people and said,

"Will you let somebody downtown know" -- I gave them my name and my company and said, "Let somebody downtown know where I am and that I'm okay and that I was taken to the hospital." I got into an ambulance and ended up at Cabrini Medical Center. I stayed there for about six hours, maybe a little less than six hours.

I got back to the firehouse. A police sergeant offered to give me a ride back down to the firehouse after I was released from Cabrini. I got back to the firehouse about 3:00 in the afternoon. They told me that they were looking for me and the chauffeur, that we were the only two from the company not accounted for.

Q. All the other guys got out?

A. Yeah, everybody from our company -- I don't know how. That's when I heard that Engine 7 got up to the 30th, 35th floor, somewhere in there, and they had gotten out just before the building came down, before the north tower came down.

Basically --

Q. That's it?

A. Basically that's it. That's what I

remember.

Q. Anything you want to add?

A. Just that I've had a cough since then.

File No. 9110432

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN BUTLER

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Butler

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 8, 2002. The time is 12:12. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Division of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter John Butler, Firefighter 1st, assigned to Engine 6 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the engine office of Engine 6. This is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

A. On the morning of September 11, Engine 6 was taking up from Box 201 at approximately 8:40 and as I turned around by the Brooklyn Bridge I observed a blackened area in Tower number 1. The engine officer of 6 Engine, Lieutenant Thomas O'Hagan, transmitted a second alarm. We came back to quarters and I picked up two additional firemen who were waiting outside the quarters and we arrived at number 1 World Trade Center at approximately 8:47.

I immediately decided or I was gonna go into high pressure. I kept -- one of the firemen I picked up, who was an engine chauffeur, with me to assist in the stretch of the line across West Street because of the traffic, we hooked up into the

Butler

standpipe and I put Engine 6 into high pressure and I notified Battalion 1 that we were in high pressure.

Members of Engine 6, at this time I don't know where they entered the building. I heard one communication regarding a Mayday situation which was transmitted by Marine 6, that they thought they had observed a major collapse of Tower number 2. While we were operating at this spot, we were there for approximately one hour before the second plane hit Tower number 2 and up until that time myself and the other member of Engine 6 were unaware that a plane had already hit Tower number 1. We were under the impression that there was some kind of a fire up there, an explosion. We thought it was like an air conditioning room within the building. At no time did I hear any communications about a plane hitting.

When a second plane struck Tower number 2, I observed a large fire ball traveling from south to north. At that time I took the other fireman, Fireman Robert Emans, with me and we proceeded to run up West Street. We ran approximately one block and then we stopped to try to figure out what exactly had happened and some short time later Tower

Butler

number 1, with the radio antenna on it, started to pancake. At that time we proceeded to run some more up West Street. A cloud that ensued from the building collapse, when it hit the ground picked up great momentum and it was right behind us all the way up West Street. We ran approximately five blocks until the cloud subsided.

We gathered our thoughts and at that time we proceeded over to 7 Engine on Duane Street to see if we could find out exactly what happened. Nobody had any additional information. We then proceeded from 7 Engine back to our own quarters on Beekman Street.

At that time, I was in communications with Deputy Chief Hill of the first division and he instructed me to be the liaison to Beekman Hospital to coordinate information about how many members were being treated, extent of the injury, company identification. I did that for approximately four hours until I was relieved by Chief Oehm of the first battalion.

At that point, we rejoined the members of Engine 6 up at the site on Broadway and Fulton Street. The only thing I can say about this whole incident, it was a complete surprise. Like I said

Butler

earlier, at no time did we know that a plane had hit Tower number 1. We must -- I must have observed the tower approximately two minutes after the first plane had hit and at no time did we know that a plane had hit. I heard no communications to evacuate the building. I was in communications with members of Engine 6. They were on the 27th floor, proceeding upward. I heard communications from a squad company that informed them that it was an hour's climb to 30.

The only other thing I have to say is probably in the future modification should be made about truck companies responding into incidents like this. When they can observe from a distance the height of the building and the location of the fire, they know they are not going to use their ladders so they should just drop the members off in front of the building and reposition their rigs at a safe distance away from the building to avoid being hit with debris or falling bodies or as in this case, a total collapse of the building.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Thank you, John. It's 12:50 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110433

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER BRENDAN LOWREY

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Lowrey

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: This is
Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the New
York City Fire Department Safety Battalion.
I'm here to interview Brendan Lowrey,
firefighter 1st of Engine 35, in the quarters
of Engine 35.

Q. Brendan, just tell me what you recall from
September 11.

A. Okay. As we were getting close to the
site, we heard on the department radio, while we
were still in the rig, we started hearing all kinds
of collapse reports, maydays. Guys were actually on
the department radio saying they were running out of
air. Then we heard -- finally we heard the
dispatcher say, "Manhattan to command center."
Nothing. "Manhattan to command center." Nothing.
Then finally said, "Manhattan to anybody at the
scene." Again nothing. So that's when we -- we
really didn't know the whole building had come down.
We thought maybe the top.

So we got off the rig and we picked up our
stuff and started -- we were on West Street, walking
south. We were reporting to Vesey and West. We got
off the rig, we started walking south to the command

Lowrey

center when a Police Officer stopped us and said, "hold up, guys. I have helicopters --" he was on the cell phone "-- on the cell phone here." And he says "When this one comes down, it's coming right for us." Meaning coming up West Street.

So we kind of delayed and, you know, looked at each other and then a chief -- we got down a little bit further, I think, and a chief told us, "okay, guys. Hang out here for a minute." And I would say less -- less than -- I don't know. It's hard to tell the time. It was probably maybe a minute or two minutes. Very brief after that the second one came down. And we watched it come down and, you know, it was coming towards us. We didn't know what it was. We didn't know if it was a building. It was black. You know, so we didn't know if it was heat, the building, whatever. It was just a huge black cloud that was chasing us, you know. So there we are, we're ducking for cover and the cloud passed us and then --

Q. You ducked behind a car?

A. What happened really was I fell down and I got caught in a stampede. It was like a doorway or something on West Street, you know. So the thing

Lowrey

went passed us. We waited a couple of minutes. Surprisingly the smoke, the black cleared within a few minutes and it was just the grey. So we figured we have to, you know, go back down there and see what's going on. You know, see if we could find anything.

So we made our way down West Street and our particular company got as far as where the walkway had collapsed by the command center.

Q. The north walkway?

A. The north walkway, right. So we did most of our operating around there. There were some pockets of fire. We actually found a pumper that was operable. A lot of them were crushed and everything. And we were, you know, shooting some water -- the pockets of fire were like 8 stories of a building. You know, stuff like that. I threw up a couple of ladders to those smaller Trade Center -- the black ones.

Q. There were some people in the customs building I think there was?

A. Yeah. So there was stuff like that, you know. So we did some searches. Then they told us they wanted us to go down in the garage. Like

Lowrey

the -- there was like an underpass. I guess it's like a garage going into underneath. So we started walking down there and we only got in about 30 yards. It was just sealed off so we came back out.

You know, we operated down there for a while. You know, we couldn't -- we weren't doing much but just, you know. Okay. You want to ask me some questions?

Q. No. Do you have anything else to add? You can keep going.

A. No. I want to think about it a little more. I don't really think we did much more than that.

Q. Okay.

(Recess taken.)

Q. Okay. Go ahead.

A. One other thing. The only company I recognized that's sitting in my head was 5 Truck. It was about 30 yards north of that walkway that was collapsed and if had its aerial extended into the --

Q. The Customs building?

A. -- Customs building. The west side of the Customs building. And that had been pretty well

Lowrey

crushed and the ladder was bent and it looked like guys had gone up into that area and I didn't see any.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. Thank you, Brendan. The time now is 12:02 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110434

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN GORMAN

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: This is January 9, 2002. The time is 2:32 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the safety battalion, the Fire Department of City of New York, conducting an interview with Firefighter 1st Kevin Gorman from Ladder 22 in the quarters of Ladder 22.

Q. Kevin, just tell us the events as you recall them on September 11.

A. We responded down West Street, parked the rig, you know, got extra cylinders and stuff, headed for the buildings.

We were stopped before the north tower by an EMS guy, myself and John Malley. Pointed to jumpers. So the other guys had gotten a little ahead of us. He was telling us get blankets for this jumper and stuff, but there were plenty of jumpers, so we just passed him.

Now we are on West Street, and we hear an urgent message. We were between the two towers. At that time, I would say we heard an urgent message from OEM, it said, where OEM informs us that there is a third plane en route, pull back to the command post.

So we pulled back to the command post, which

K. GORMAN

was the parking garage there, and lined up with everybody, stood there, waited until we got orders. The captain -- I think was Mike ^ inaudible -- came up and ordered all truck companies to one side and then brought us all to the south tower.

We headed down underneath the south pedestrian walkway, stayed under there because of all the debris, and bodies and stuff, and then one by one we kind of ran into the hotel, you know, looking up, we ran into the hotel lobby entrance, or I think it was the restaurant entrance.

Wherever it was, it was facing, I think, south, so it was right near the south pedestrian bridge. Ran into there, got into the lobby there, opened up our jackets, got some water from some of the people that worked there and stuff, employees, and were waiting further instructions.

Lieutenant went to, I believe, Chief Galvin -- I'm not sure who it was -- got our orders to go to the 77th Floor and above of the south tower, headed out of the lobby of the hotel, which in the hotel there were other firemen. I don't recall from what companies. Not too many guys I recognized, so it must have been probably Brooklyn companies.

K. GORMAN

I saw Joe Rivelli from 25 truck, and then we headed out of the hotel lobby, passed Chief Galvin, and were, as far as we knew, heading for the south tower, passed another couple of chiefs walking through a walkway, made a right turn, were heading towards what we believed to be the south tower. There are some discrepancies. I don't know if you heard. We are not sure of exactly if we were in between or -- went through this other lobby, doorways, walked into that lobby.

Everything was dark. Water was coming down and everything like that, and then the shit hit the fan. Just everything started rumbling, a lot of noise. Turned around, went back the way I came, got probably five steps through the doorway I had just came. I don't even know if I got to that, because there was a walk -- there were bars in front of that that weren't there any more, got knocked off my feet and sent -- was buried under some stuff and pushed across the floor, and after everything stopped dug ourselves out, put the flashlight on, yelled for each other and then exited the building.

I couldn't even say which way. Towards air. You couldn't really see anything.

K. GORMAN

Q. Did your whole company get together or --

A. Everybody but the lieutenant ran into each other, so we all saw each other. We got underneath by this glass partition. One guy went to look for the lieutenant. We stood there for a couple of minutes and then exited the building.

Q. Then what happened? Where did you go from there?

A. Ran outside. We ended up being right by where the command post was, went over some wall outside, a cement wall, went across the street, made radio transmissions. I was speaking with Lieutenant Reilly, my officer. He was asking me who I saw.

I said I saw everyone, and since I got out of the building, I've seen -- and I said the names of the members that I saw from our company. I saw Lieutenant Wall from 47 engine, another fireman from 47 engine right out on West Street there, and then we stood there, waited.

We were talking on the radio. He was trying to make sure that -- he was looking for the one member of 22 that went looking for him, so we were trying to get radio transmissions with each other, and then we started heading north towards the rig.

K. GORMAN

Q. But that was after the first collapse, right?

A. Yeah.

Q. So what happened?

A. Now we are by the rig for the second collapse.

Q. On West Street?

A. Yeah, and there were guys working on me. I had a cut on my head. Fernando Camacho had a cut on his head. Guys were giving us water, wet rags to put on our head, and we were standing there, and there was a cop I knew who came by and gave me a drink of water, and then as he was standing there, he said, "Aviation just reported that the north tower is leaning." I said, "Which way is it leaning?" He said, "This way."

So we started to turn around walking. John Malley, who was right behind me, I turned around for him, because he was doing something, either putting his coat on or something, and as I was looking at him I heard the explosion, looked up, and saw like three floors explode, saw the antenna coming down, and turned around and ran north.

Q. About how long would you say it was from when the police officer told you it was leaning?

A. Within 30 seconds.

K. GORMAN

Q. Did you know if he had a lot of warning or did he just find out himself?

A. It was my personal opinion that because they -- as I was going a little north towards the rig, they were coming this way, and they all seemed to be hustling out of the way, even before he got to me. So there was a group of cops that hustled north before he got to me, so that crossed my mind, why is -- seeing they were -- you know, I don't know I was aware that even the south tower collapsed. I remember seeing, like, a hole in the hotel, down the middle, but I don't think I was aware that the south tower had collapsed.

Q. Now you went north, and you had the second collapse. What happened at this point? You got engulfed in smoke again?

A. In the ash. Went into the school that was there, washed my face off a little bit, washed my eyes out, came outside, trying to reach the officer again.

We all grouped up there right by that pedestrian bridge, Stuyvesant, I think.

Q. Yes, by Chambers Street or --

A. Yeah.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you very much. The time now is 2:39, and this concludes

File No. 9110436

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PETER GIAMMARINO

Interview Date: January 9, 2002

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

P. GIAMMARINO

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 9, 2002. The time is 12:36, and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the safety battalion of the Fire Department of City of New York.

I'm conducting an interview with Peter Giammarino, firefighter 2nd, from Engine 58 in the quarters of Engine 58.

Q. Peter, just tell us what you remember from September 11.

A. Okay, chief. On our way downtown, I think it was somewhere in the 40s, we made a turn towards the west side to go down the west side. I believe we took the Westside Highway, and all the cops had their guns drawn, so we knew -- you know, we knew there was -- we knew beforehand, actually. After the second plane hit the south tower, we kind of knew it wasn't an accident.

So when we pulled up with all the rigs, I think we stopped about -- there was a pedestrian crossing. I think it was Vesey Street and West Street, and we had a couple of extra guys on the rig, so we grabbed everything that we could: Roll-ups, extra bottles, life-saving rope, Halligans, search rope, everything that we can carry, that we can think of,

P. GIAMMARINO

which was pretty much everything, all the CFRD equipment.

And as we approached the towers -- I remember when we got off the rig, our lieutenant told us to stick together, so that was our main objective, to get into the building, if it's going to be a long operation, to stay together.

So when we got down towards the towers, we kind of got separated inadvertently, because there were jumpers, and they were pretty much landing right in front of us, and it was hazardous. That fireman from 216 -- I think it was from 216 -- that got hit by a jumper, he was right next to us, right close to us, so when he had gotten hit, somehow as a company, we split up.

Between that -- and there was -- the whole block I think was on fire. All the parked cars were on fire. There were a couple of firemen hooked up right to a hydrant fighting the car fires. I don't know what companies they were from, though. I didn't notice that.

So between -- basically we had to navigate ourselves into the building without getting hit by either the debris or jumpers, so we split up as a

P. GIAMMARINO

company. So half of us went in and half of us remained outside, and then eventually we were able to get into the lobby of the Marriott.

We were there just a few minutes. I mean, when we first walked in, I saw some guys from 131 truck. I rotated through there, so I knew them, and one of the guys said to me that he had just heard that the Pentagon was bombed, be careful up there.

So we went into the lobby just a few feet towards the elevator banks, and our lieutenant said "Stand fast, open up your coats, cool off a few minutes, and I'm going to go see what we gotta do."

And it seemed like maybe it was a minute. It wasn't that long at all, and we heard this sound that kind of sounded like an airplane. We thought it was another airplane hitting the towers. That's exactly what it sounded like, you know, and it gradually got louder. And someone yelled, "It's coming towards the windows," like the front of the Marriott that might have been like an atrium or something like that.

So we basically -- we all ran for cover somewhere where we could, you know, just wherever we ended up. There was nowhere to go really. Then it got black, and there was a lot of wind, and stuff flying

P. GIAMMARINO

all over, and then when everything stopped, we were trapped in there, and we had to negotiate our way out, so I was with two other guys from my company, and maybe one or two other firemen. I don't know what company they were from, though, and we found our way out, and we let some civilians out, and we heard a radio transmission from my lieutenant. I didn't have the radio that day.

Q. Lieutenant Nagel?

A. Lieutenant Nagel. He had made a radio transmission. He was giving a role call. He wanted to know where we were and who was with us. So it didn't sound like he was trapped or anything like that.

We thought -- the three of us thought that the rest of our company was out of the building, so we lost all radio transmissions, and then there was a Mayday given, so we didn't want to jump on the radio on top of that.

I think it was Fireman Brennan from 4 truck. He was saying that he was knocked unconscious, and he had no idea where he was. He gave that two or three times. He gave his name and his company and what had happened to him, and I later learned that he was in the lobby of the Marriott, and Lieutenant Nagel had

P. GIAMMARINO

mentioned to the guys in the lobby that he was like 10 feet from him, so they were in that same area where the elevator banks were.

We also had a couple of chiefs from the 12th battalion in that area, too, Chief Marchbanks and Scheffold.

So after the south tower had come down, me and two other guys from the company had gotten out. Ansbro and Weber, and we were just trying to regroup. We didn't even know what had happened. I didn't even think the tower had come down, because when you look up at them, at a certain angle, one hides behind the other. Like at a certain angle, you don't realize that there's two there. That is what I thought I was looking at. I had no idea that it had come down, so I just couldn't focus at that time, you know. I couldn't really comprehend what had happened.

So somehow or another, we had got away from the debris field a little bit, and there were injured civilians and police, and we started assisting them, and then before you knew it, the other tower, the north tower, had come down or started -- it came down, and so then I realized really what had happened with the south tower.

P. GIAMMARINO

Q. Where were you when the north tower came down?

A. When the north tower came down, we were by -- there were some boat slips. We were in that area, so when the north tower came down, we were over there, and just a few minutes later Mike Fitzpatrick, who was our chauffeur that day, he came. He hurt his leg, so he was like walking with a limp or he was favoring that one leg, and he had told us that we were missing Lieutenant Nagel and David McGovern.

At that time, we thought David was missing, because he was separated from all of us. I'm not sure when he got out after the north tower or the south tower came down, but there were three guys from 58 after the south tower that came down that were in the lobby in the Marriott trying to free Lieutenant Nagel, because he was trapped. He was in a tight spot, but he was okay, and they were working with 122 truck, and then another few minutes later the other members from the company came out, and we regrouped, and we went back into the lobby of the Marriott again, because we knew where our lieutenant was, so we were hoping that he was still in that void where he was.

So we were in there just for a few minutes

P. GIAMMARINO

maybe and the chiefs pulled us out. They told us we had to get out, so we got out, and then later on we went back in again, and they pulled us out once more, and that was it. They said we lost radio transmissions, and we couldn't risk any members to go in there at that point, because the Marriott was leaning.

It turns out that it leaned for awhile until they knocked it down, but at that point, it was leaning, and they didn't want to put us in that risk of coming down on us.

That's basically it. Do you need anything after that?

Q. No, that's fine.

A. We did actually -- we heard that 288 -- there were some members from 58 that saw Squad 288.

When we were in the street with the fireman from 216 that had gotten hit, the other half of the company went in, and they had seen 288 in the lobby, and one of those guys was on the telephone, and I mean that -- I didn't see that. That's what they had told me, so he was calling someone before they went up whatever, and they were just a couple of minutes before us, ahead of us, and I think also 279 might have been

P. GIAMMARINO

just a few minutes ahead of us also, Engine 279.

Q. You think they went into the south tower or they were all in the lobby?

A. Well, I had spoken to guys from 131 truck, and they had told me that -- I don't know. I think they're dispatched differently to the trade center, but for some reason I think they were together in the lobby, and the engine 279 had just went ahead.

They were just ahead of the truck, but I didn't see 279. I did see 131, though. I don't know. I really don't know where.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: That's fine, Pete.

Thank you. The time now is 12:48, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110439

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER STEPHEN VIOLA

Interview Date: January 10, 2002

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's January 10, 2002. The time is 1230 hours, and this is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER VIOLA: Steve Viola, firefighter 2nd Grade, Engine 47.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of the Fire Department of the City of New York, at the quarters of Engine 47, regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Q. Okay, Steve.

A. We parked about three blocks up from the towers, and we walked down underneath the pedestrian bridge. It took us a little while to get across into the hotel because of the debris coming down, but we ended up getting in there, and the chief, the deputy chief in there, had all the engine companies go to the left, all the truck companies go to the right, and he brought all the officers over to him and told them their particular assignment and told us to switch to Channel 3. I remember that.

I think it was the security guy, a guy that

S. VIOLA

worked in one of the towers, took us. He said there was an elevator working, and he took us into the north tower, and there was one elevator out of 6 in the bank working.

22 engine went up before us. 13 truck went up before us, and then one of our guys -- one of the guys from 13 truck. Our guy went in with 13 truck, and he was coming down with the guy from 13 truck to bring the elevator to us, and when he was either going up or coming down the elevator, that's when the south tower collapsed, and it sounded like a bunch of explosions.

You heard like loud booms, but I guess it was all just stuff coming down, and then we got covered with rubble and dust, and I thought we'd actually fallen through the floor into like the PATH tubes, because it was so dark you couldn't see anything, and from there it was a little hazy from there on, but I remember our lieutenant trying to take us back out through the Marriott the way we came, but that was -- we couldn't go through that way, and we ended up coming out through -- I guess it was the base of the north tower out onto West Street, and ended up -- me and another guy put on one of the ambulances, and we were just waiting to leave on the ambulance.

S. VIOLA

We were in there -- I don't know how long we were in there. For awhile, because one guy, they thought he had a broken neck, and they actually went back, because one of our guys was still in the elevator, so they went back to see if they could get him out, and then while we were in the ambulance, the driver came out and said, "Get out and run to the river," because that's when the out tower was coming down.

And we ended up getting down to the water, right behind -- I think it was a school building, and after the big dust cloud passed over, we made our way up West Street, like six, seven, eight blocks, and another ambulance came and picked us up. How far up that was, I'm not sure.

Q. Is there anything else you want to say?

A. No, that's basically it. We never really got to go up, so I never really got to do anything.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: This concludes the interview. It's approximately 12:37.

Thank you for your cooperation, Steve. I appreciate it.

THE WITNESS: You're welcome, chief.

File No. 9110440

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN DRUMM

Interview Date: January 10, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 10, 2002. The time is 1345 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER DRUMM: Firefighter John Drumm.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Assigned to Ladder 16 of the Fire Department of the City of New York, at the quarters of Ladder 16, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. John, if you can just tell in your own words what happened that day.

A. The first time I found out about the whole incident, we were in the kitchen of the firehouse when someone came in and told us they just had heard a plane crashed into the twin towers. We went out to the house watch from the kitchen, listened to the department radio. About a minute after getting into house watch, Engine 39, which I was assigned on that day to -- I was

assigned to work in Engine 39 on September 11th. About a minute after I went out of the house watch, Engine 39 got sent on the run.

Q. Let me just stop a second. Okay. Go ahead, just from where you were.

A. 39 got the run, like I said, a minute after walking in the house watch.

Two of us got into the back step of 39 and two other members drove down the high-rise rig, high-rise number 2, and we made our way downtown. While we were on our way down, we heard over the department radio in the rig that the second tower had also now been hit by a plane.

After heading downtown on Second Avenue, we came across on Houston. After we were coming across to the west side of Manhattan on Houston, looking southbound along the major avenues, I could see both towers --

(Interruption.)

A. As I was saying, when 39 was making their way downtown, we had used Houston Street to go across to the west side. And as we passed other major avenues, you could have a clear view

downtown. I was able to see both the north tower and the south tower, both in flames and plumes of smoke over them.

We came down the West Side Highway. We parked the rigs just south of Vesey Street, on West Street we parked. As we were getting out of the rigs, there was a chief that was instructing the chauffeur of 39 and the driver of the high-rise to move them further down West Street, more in the front of the north tower.

I'm not too sure, after hearing the chief say that, how the rigs were moved, being a member of the inside. We just grabbed our rollups and headed for the building.

We headed towards the north tower. We were assigned on the run to report to the north tower. We made our way into the building through the northwest corner of the building. The windows on the first floor were all broken out, so we didn't even go down to the doorway. We just went into the corner of the building, which all the glass was blown out, and used that way to get into the building.

As we were approaching the building, we

had walked underneath the passenger bridge that's just south of Vesey and hugged the wall, because on our way into the building there was a lot of debris falling and, as everybody knows, there were also people jumping. On our way in, we were able to see a few of those people. So we were hugging the wall of the building just on the northwest corner of tower one to avoid the debris.

We made our way into the lobby of the north tower, where we saw a command post being assembled and a battalion chief or a battalion aide had seen us coming in, and he instructed us, 39 Engine, to team up with 65 Engine, which we did. He also instructed us to use the B stairwell to ascend. We were instructed just keep climbing until you get upstairs to where you can help other companies set up your lines, stretch and go into operation.

We made our way up the stairs from there, the B stairwell. The highest point we climbed was the 31st floor.

Q. Wow.

A. As everybody knows, there was civilians

coming down at the same time on our way up.

There was one behind the other on their right of the staircase, and we stayed towards the center of the staircase, the firemen, on our right, the center of the staircase, and made our way up.

We met some very nice people on the way up. They offered the firemen water and actually I want to put that in the record because it was a nice thing. One civilian offered to carry my rollup for a while at one point. I said, "Thank you very much, sir, but I'll get it."

We helped a few civilians get down a little bit. Most of the civilians we passed were able to walk on their own. A few civilians I met on the way up were actually being helped by civilians too. A woman who was a burn victim, one of the firemen helped clear the stairway at that time because they were carrying her and it took a larger width of the stairwell. So we cleared all the civilians out of the way for that, just made sure the civilians stayed in order, which they did. They were very orderly.

When we got to the 31st floor, at that point -- we ascended as fast as we could, but

there were other firemen in front of us and slowly but surely making our way up. When we got to the 31st floor, Lieutenant McGlynn, who was the officer of Engine 39 that day, had instructed us to stand by on the 31st floor where he was going to wait for further instruction or try to hook up with a nearby chief.

I'm not too sure exactly what he was trying to find out everything. But he was probably maybe seeing if they wanted to start stretching lines from a lower standpipe. But he had told us just to stand by while he waited to talk to a chief.

While on the 31st floor, as I said, we were told to stand by by Lieutenant McGlynn, our officer for the day, waiting for further instruction. As we were waiting, we waited in the hallway on the 31st floor out of the stairwell to stay out of the crowd of civilians and all, not to clog up the stairwell. We waited for our instructions in the hallway of the 31st floor.

We also first went in there to make sure also -- when we were about 12 floors below

that there was a transmission that there was several members and police officers on the 31st floor that had chest pains and difficulty breathing. Being an engine company, we went in there to see if there was any CRFD work we could do on the members.

As we went into the stairwell, also waiting for instructions to be given to Lieutenant McGlynn, everybody was being taken care of on the 31st floor, all members that had chest pains and difficulty breathing. Someone had already gotten to them and was giving them oxygen.

So besides making sure everyone was okay, we were waiting there. Maybe we were on the 31st hallway for approximately five minutes when all of a sudden a large crashing, thundering, roaring -- it's almost impossible to really explain with those words, but it was so much more noise than I could ever really explain clearly.

The members that were nearby, we all went and got down on our hands and knees on the floor, not knowing what this was, walls, floor.

I had no idea. I had no idea what was happening until I got out of the building later in the day I had found out what happened. Later in the day I found out what was going on when all of us were on the floor and all that roaring was going on was the south tower collapsing.

While on the 31st floor and still in the building, I didn't know that. As I said, I didn't know the south tower came down until I was out of the building and away from the collapse.

But while we were on the 31st floor, everyone was down. Everybody was on their hands and knees. It was almost confirmed by -- it made me feel comfortable of not knowing what it was that one fireman was standing up -- I'm not too sure if he was a rescue member. I think I remember seeing a blue patch on his helmet. I'm not positive of the number. I think it was a blue batch on his helmet, and I think it was a rescue member.

He was telling all the members in the hallway, maybe about 20 or 30 firefighters in the hallway at the time, to relax and calm down, that it was only the skin of the building. I remember

that clearly, this firefighter saying that. That relaxed me a little bit, not that I probably even thought that it was the south tower collapsing or what it was, but it was just something very disturbing.

In a way he comforted me a little bit. But as I found out later, it was not just the skin of the building coming down; it was the south tower.

After the noise had stopped, there was a transmission on the radio that I had. I was in a position on 39 control that day, so I had a radio so I could hear it myself on my radio. There was a transmission that I'm guessing was repeated about five times: "Imminent collapse, imminent collapse of the north tower. Immediate evacuation." At least five times I heard that.

Q. A lot of guys didn't get that. That's good that you got it.

A. Yeah. Now I don't know how everything happened with -- how the radios were with the members on the upper floors, but on the 31st floor I was able to hear that they wanted the north tower to be evacuated.

We were waiting for the officer's order before taking up and start walking, maybe a couple minutes past where he was confirming, listening for further transmissions or talking to other officers that were in the area. He wasn't sure that's what they wanted us to do.

We started to descend the building at that time and went right back into the B stairwell and descended down all the way to the lobby in the B stairwell.

On our way down it was a lot clearer, the stairwell, of civilians. On the way up it was one behind the other order -- orderly but one behind the other of civilians on the way down the staircase. After standing on the 31st floor and the collapse of the south tower happening and making our way back into the stairwell, there was a lot less civilians. Most of the civilians hopefully at that point were already down. But there were still a few we ran into on the way down.

One woman we assisted. She was having trouble breathing. The only air we had left was a cylinder. One of the members had a cylinder

and I helped to purge it to let the woman get a hit off our mask. So we gave her the mask. She was able to walk after that, and she was with two civilian men that were going to stay with her the rest of the way down.

On the way down we also ran into -- most firemen that we saw were heading down the staircase at this time, but approximately the 20th floor I remember running into Captain Ill of Ladder 2 and Officer McGlynn, my officer for the day, talked to him a little bit, asking him if he had heard the transmission.

Being right next to Lieutenant McGlynn, I was able to hear that conversation. Captain Ill said yes, he did hear it, and he was just making sure that everybody was out before he was heading down.

With McGlynn knowing that he heard the transmission, we continued to climb down. As we got down to the lower floors, we walked a little bit slower. It was very congested with firemen down at the bottom of the staircase making our way out. But eventually we got down to the lobby.

Lieutenant McGlynn was leading. I followed him. We walked back in the same direction out of the stairwell B, which is between the elevator bank, back to West Street. So we were heading to the exact spot where we came into the building, which was the northwest corner of the building.

Lieutenant McGlynn came to a stop, I'm assuming this was to check that all his members were out of the stairwell. I looked at Lieutenant McGlynn on my way past him, thought I made eye contact with him. He actually didn't see me.

All the firemen in front of me were still walking, so I followed them out the northwest corner of the building, which wasn't even a doorway, just all the glass on the lobby floor had been blown out. So it was a clear passage through there, the exact same corner of the building we came in.

We hugged the exact same wall of the building that's just north of the north tower. I'm not too sure what that is, whatever that building is. Building five?

Q. The customs building.

A. Yeah.

Q. I think that's building six, but it's the customs building.

A. Building six. It's the building that's on the corner of Vesey and West.

Q. Yeah, right.

A. There's a big sidewalk in front of the north tower, but I just hugged the wall of that for the same reasoning --

Q. So it would be this building.

A. Yeah, we came out of this northwest corner of the north tower, and this was right along the sidewalk. So we just hugged this wall of the U.S. --

Q. Customs building.

A. -- customs building. And when you follow this wall back to the West Side Highway to the street, it's right where the passenger bridge is.

So when I got to the passenger bridge, I was probably walking at a normal pace, not running, all the way to that passenger bridge from the building. And as I approached the

passenger bridge and just got underneath it, there were two firemen that were standing there, looking back up toward the building.

As I approached them, all of a sudden I heard a bunch of firemen, including these two guys I saw, start yelling, "Get out of the way! Go, go, go! Don't look back! Don't look back! The building's coming down!"

Of course like anybody else, instinct takes over and I look back. As I was underneath this passenger bridge, I can see the north tower at the top starting to come down. With that and everybody yelling just go, whoever I listened to -- I guess I listened to -- one fireman said, "Let's go north on West Street."

So right from the passenger bridge I kept going back, and why I was going that way too was you go back to your rig after a job or whatever. That's where our rigs were when we left them was Vesey and West. So I was heading that way anyway. Thank God he also said north and I continued on West.

As soon as he said that, I looked, saw the building come down, and just took off running

north on West Street. I ran as far up as Stuyvesant High School. About just north of Vesey Street is I guess when the building was very close -- at the ground, and now the dust cloud was starting to push up West Street.

Just north of West Street I guess I started seeing the dust cloud. One fireman I saw in the middle of the street continued holding cylinders, but laying on the top of the cylinders was a mask. So he probably assumed that maybe the whole thing had a mask in it, complete mask.

He said, "Run, grab a mask!" I ran over to the container. He had grabbed a mask, but the only thing else that was left in the container was --

Q. Cylinder?

A. A cylinder. I just kept running. But just after that container, which was like at the corner of Vesey, the smoke just came right over us. So from Vesey Street until Stuyvesant High School, we were searching through this dust cloud.

I had left my mask up on the 31st floor. When they said to evacuate, they just

said drop everything. So I dropped my mask, dropped my rollups, and just said let's get out of the building. So I had no mask when this dust cloud came. So I used my hood as some type of vent to keep some of the stuff from going in my lungs.

Probably from Vesey all the way to Stuyvesant High School I was in the dust cloud, actually searching my way up West Street. I was still thinking of training in proby school, you know, hug the walls until you find a window frame.

I found the curb and a parked car. Thank God the car was faced the right direction, and I was using the front end as the direction to point north. I kept walking that way, because I could not see anything. All I could hear was everyone screaming and yelling.

There were one or two firemen that had tripped on the way up. I picked them up. They weren't hurt. They just tripped over something probably on the street. I picked them up and kept going.

But eventually when I got to about

Stuyvesant High School, I was able to see through the dust cloud. I made my way inside Stuyvesant High School where I was coughing for a little while. I don't know if I was there maybe half an hour, clearing my mouth out with some water. Some of the teachers were bringing water over to me, and the security guards were helping out.

As I got my senses back together and all and had help from people to strip off my gear and cool off, I guess, and civilians were helping me out. Finally -- I don't know how long it was, maybe half an hour -- I stopped coughing and was able to gain my senses and feel myself and everything was all right. I started thinking.

I didn't know at the time but I found out later in the day that when I left the north tower in the lobby I had thought my officer had seen me, Lieutenant McGlynn, and he hadn't seen me. When I continued out of the building, the other members of Engine 39 made their way out of the staircase and saw Lieutenant McGlynn. Lieutenant McGlynn asked them if they had seen Drumm. That's my last name. They all said, "No, I didn't see him." "Did you see him?" "No, I

didn't see him."

I would never have known if they came out. Thank God all four of them are alive. But they had gone back into the staircase to search for me --

Q. Oh, Jesus.

A. -- not knowing that I came out of the building. To find out more -- I believe they've been interviewed too and it's on the record. But I think they made it somewhere, they told me, maybe around to the fifth floor and thank God that the staircase was able to withstand the weight that it stood.

They had their trauma and I don't want to tell you a story that they'll tell their own if they haven't all right. But they had an ordeal. If they didn't come out, I probably would have never known that they had gone back in for me. But thank God they're alive. That means a lot to me that they had gone back in for me. It means a lot more than I know that they're still alive.

I think that I can go on with the story in detail, so I think that's pretty much my

experience from getting the run at the firehouse to getting out of the building. I guess after getting out of the building and getting my senses back together at Stuyvesant High School, I geared back up and started heading back down. I don't know if my radio was turned down or turned off. I wasn't listening to the radio when I was in the high school coughing.

I made my way back out to the street. The radio was still working. I turned it on or it was on. I started listening to the radio as to what the heck was going on. I knew the north tower had come down, but not until really I was done running at Stuyvesant High School had I found out that the south tower was the noise I had heard when we were still on the 31st floor. That's when I realized that both buildings were down was after I came back out into the street from Stuyvesant High School.

Over the radio I was hearing the chauffeur of 39, Arthur Meyers, trying to raise Engine 39. I heard that message from him several times. Eventually I was able to get through the radio. The radio was of course very busy.

Eventually I was able to just get in a couple words with him. I knew who it was. He asked my location. I told him who I was and where I was. We met up at -- I don't know if it was Vesey or -- what's the next one up?

Q. Barclay.

A. Yeah, somewhere near Barclay, near Barclay and West Street, I ended hooking up with him. Maybe a half an hour after or an hour after the collapse, I ended up finding him. He went on to try to raise Engine 39 for a while longer. Then the radio was just so busy. There was no response back from 39.

What we were thinking then -- we didn't know what to think, because the radios weren't working. We didn't know where they were, because I didn't know that they hadn't come out of the building. I thought they were with me and the rest of the crowd of firemen that, like I said, walked out of the building to that passenger bridge. But I thought they were with me the whole time.

So we couldn't raise them on the radio. We just decided to stay together the rest of the

day. Pretty much nothing after a while. We stayed together. Maybe a couple hours later I ended up running into some of the truck guys from Ladder 16 at Vesey and West. Lieutenant Dan Williams was the first one I saw, actually.

I didn't believe it until I saw each one of the engine members, but Lieutenant Williams was the first one to tell me they were okay, at least that they were alive. That is when I started to find out, because there is a restaurant that is off of West Street down in Battery Park City. But near Vesey, a block in off West, there was a few members.

Lieutenant Williams said, "Go to the front of this restaurant on the corner, one block in off of West on Vesey," where I met up with one of the members who was actually out on rotation, but he was here at the time.

Firefighter Bob Bacon was the first one I saw. He was one of the four members that had gone back into the building for me. That's when I found out the story of what they had done. I was really upset at that point that I knew they did that but also glad that they all came out.

Two of them I think had gone to the hospital. Nobody had any really bad injuries except abrasions, cuts, problems with breathing. I believe two of the members, Jeff Coniglio and James Efthimiades, I believe they went to the hospital from the scene right away.

When I saw everybody eventually, they all got the biggest bear hug I ever gave anybody. But I finally heard the story that afternoon from Bob Bacon. I saw him. Then later in the day I saw Lieutenant McGlynn. Actually I just hooked up with him just before -- up near Stuyvesant High School where they were reassembling us at one point. I just hooked up with him, didn't even get to talk with him, when building seven, was that what it was?

Q. Yeah, building seven.

A. At like 5:00.

Q. 5:00, yeah.

A. 5:00 in the afternoon. I just ran into him and was about to talk to him about the story, and everybody is yelling "Run!" again. We made our way up away from West Street a little bit. We were actually heading into the school anyway.

They were trying to reassemble I think inside.
So we ran into the school. Then I'm talking to
him.

I think the next day I saw James
Efthimiades. Then I saw Jeff Coniglio on
Thursday. I finally was happy I saw all the
members were alive.

I believe that -- everything is so
small details from my experience on September
11th.

Q. Okay. Is there anything else you want
to add? Anything else?

A. No. I mentioned seeing Ladder 2.

Q. Yes, you mentioned seeing Freddie Ill?

A. Just by the time we got downstairs,
there was very few civilians I saw. I guess all
the work we did on our way up keeping them
orderly -- from what I saw on the way down, very,
very few civilians were left, and they were
coming with us. Everybody I was with felt on our
way down all the floors were clear and there was
no other civilians in the building.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Okay. That's the end
of the interview. The time is 1420 hours,

and that concludes the interview. Thank
you.

File No. 9110441

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER HUGH METTHAM

Interview Date: January 10, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 10th, 2002. The time is 10:45 hours. This is B.C. Frank Congiusta of the Safety Division of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER METTHAM: Fireman Hugh J. Mettham.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of Ladder 18 of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Ladder 18, and this interview is regarding is events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Hugh, go ahead and tell your story.

A. The morning of September 11th starts like most mornings in firehouses around the city. Firefighters make coffee, catch up on firehouse news, check the apparatus and find their riding position for the tour. This is all interrupted around 8:47 by a plane that crashes into the north tower of the World Trade Center.

Little did Lieutenant Borega, Firefighters Charlie Maloney, Harry Coyle, Steve Merenda, Ralph Cardino, Kevin Murray and I

realize that this incident would change all of us, the Fire Department, the city we work for, and would become the most tragic and eventful day in New York City history.

Ladder 18 is located on the lower east side of Manhattan and is housed with Battalion 4. On September 11th Battalion 4 responds after the initial plane crash. Ladder 18 responds eight minutes later, approximately 8:55, on the fifth alarm to box 8087, World Trade Center, north tower.

Over the department radio we hear that people are jumping from the upper floors and that the whole building is being evacuated. Charlie Maloney, who is very knowledgeable about fires and building construction, mentions to us that he has a funny feeling and doesn't like the sound of this.

Lieutenant Borega tells me, the chauffeur for that day, to respond to the World Trade Center by the FDR Drive through the West Street tunnel at the battery. Just before reaching the West Street tunnel, the south tower is hit by another plane.

Even though we hadn't witnessed the crash, the planes and thick black smoke from the impact could be seen before entering the tunnel. We all sensed the terrible reality that we were heading into something much larger and more horrifying than a single plane crash.

Lieutenant Borega immediately looks at me, and we both verbalized something about a terrorist attack. My foot starts to bounce on the accelerator pedal, dancing with anxiety.

It was just south of Liberty on West Street that we first encountered debris from the plane crashes. I steered away from Liberty Street and head north on West Street, away from possible impact from falling building parts and jumpers.

Since we were heading to the north tower, I parked the apparatus under the pedestrian walkway bridge that goes over West Street. The bridge affords us protection from debris falling off the tower while we make our way to the command post in the lobby. Still we have to hug the outer portion of the tower, hoping that nothing falls on or near us.

Once inside the lobby of the north tower, we prepare for a long climb. Lieutenant Borega goes to the command post to get our floor assignment. While waiting we watched the chaotic scene unfold before us. Jumpers fall from the sky and crash on the pavement outside the large lobby windows.

The fire commissioner moves through the throng of firefighters, telling us to evacuate the building, seeming to imply not to worry about putting out the fires.

Fire Chaplain Mychal Judge is silent, seeming to be praying for all of us, his eyes not looking at anyone in particular but silently speaking to all to be safe.

At this time Harry Coyle nudges me and whispers, "Kevin's father is in one of the towers." I think of the tremendous emotion and anxiety I have and know that Kevin has to bear with the extra burden of having a relative on the upper floor of the tower.

Lieutenant Borega returns to the command post at the lobby and tells us to start on the third floor and work our way up to help

evacuate people. We will check the stairways and floors and assist civilians who are trapped or need assistance coming down.

I am surprised and a bit relieved that Ladder 18 is not climbing far. But the words "Make your way up" clearly means that we are eventually going to climb.

We decided to drop and leave our spare air cylinders in the lobby. The extra weight is not needed. We all sense we must conserve our energy and climb slowly and quietly. I grab a few bottles of water from the abandoned newstand and hand some to Harry. Water will be needed.

As we enter the stairs, we meet people evacuating the upper floors. Some are wet and exhausted. I am impressed by their behavior, no shouting or pushing but openly concerned about the firefighters' welfare and for others still coming down.

When we reached the fourth floor, Steve and Ralph forced a few doors, and no one is found. Charlie, realizing that some of the lower floors are probably maintenance areas, tells us to take a quick look around and then to go up.

We enter the fifth floor. Once again we are in the maintenance area. Lieutenant Borega tells us to find all the stairwells and staircases that lead down. We discover that three staircases are in use evacuating people.

Suddenly the north tower starts to rumble and shake violently. We all head to stairwell B and huddle near the door while the floor we are on shakes and rumbles for 30 seconds for more. Lights go out, and we are thrown into total darkness. Stairways and hallways fill with smoke and dust as the rumble and roar subsides.

All of us start to speculate on the cause of the rumble. It could be another plane crash or localized collapse. Someone in the darkness mentions a bomb. There is little time now to ponder what just happened. What could shake the north tower so violently?

Lieutenant Borega tells us to start a lighting relay with our flashlights to assist the civilians that are leaving the staircases and converging with us on the fifth floor. Apparently smoke and dust had filled it up or down the staircases and elevator shafts, causing

civilians to look for another way down.

Communication abruptly stops on our department radios. Only a few mayday and urgent messages are heard and then abruptly end. Charlie Maloney decides to go down stairway B to see if the staircase is still usable. The rest of us guide and redirect civilians from stairwell A and C to stairwell B and wait for Charlie's words to send them down.

Stairwells A and C are heavily charged with smoke and dust and appeared to be unusable at this time. We are concerned that we are unable to contact Charlie. But with growing anxiety among civilians on the fifth floor who want to evacuate, we guided them down to the lobby.

At this time with no other civilians coming down any of the stairwells, Lieutenant Borega tells us to leave the fifth floor and says, "Let's get out of here." I questioned Harry Coyle about Charlie's whereabouts. He assures me that Charlie went down stairwell B and is probably helping people leave the lobby. As Lieutenant Borega, Steve, Ralph, Kevin, Harry and

I descend, I can only hope that we will meet him there.

The scene in the lobby now is complete chaos. Small fires and smoke rise from one area. Marble sections that line the walls have smashed. Cable, glass and elevator parts litter the area. We maneuver around the debris looking for Charlie and are met by a rescue firefighter saying that there are Fire Department members trapped on the 11th floor.

Ralph and I exchanged glances. We turned around and start to ascend the B staircase again to assist in the rescue effort. Ralph says to me, "Boy, we're tempting fate now." We reached the sixth or seventh floor and are met by many firefighters coming down the stairs, informing us that the upper floors are collapsing and that there's a heavy odor of gas and fuel.

Fearing for our safety through the rapidly deteriorating conditions, Lieutenant Borega tells us to head back to the lobby. Hoping that Charlie has left the building, we meet Engine 28 in the lobby. Harry and I mention to one of the members of 28 that Ladder 18 is

leaving the tower. Lieutenant Borega also tells Engine 28's officer that we are leaving.

Debris can be seen falling outside the lobby's broken doors as both companies attempt to leave. Once again we are forced to hug close to the outside perimeter of the building, fearing that debris might fall on us.

We reach the pedestrian walkway on West Street, and Harry sits down on the back step of a fire engine to catch his breath. Steve and Ralph continue north on West Street, unaware that Harry is feeling sick.

I look at Harry and then glance over his shoulder. I am stunned by the terrible destruction just south of the north tower. I try to come up with some explanation for it but can't. Something is telling me to leave this area right now.

I tell Harry, "If you can get up, I think we should move now." Harry nods, says something and then rises from the back step of the engine. Lieutenant Borega, Kevin, Harry and I start to walk fast in a northerly direction on West Street.

15 seconds later, near the corner of Vesey and West Street, we hear a terrible roar behind and above us. The upper section of the north tower begins to collapse and push out a wave of smoke, ash and debris.

We run in fear of our lives. The entire north tower collapses, and we are not going to outrun the tremendous cloud of ash and debris that is toppling down and bulging outwards.

Kevin and I dive under a fire truck while Lieutenant Borega, Harry and Steve take refuge behind or under other parked apparatus. I hug the ground in a fetal position, protecting my eyes and face from pellets of concrete that are bouncing off my fire helmet and body.

A dark cloud of dust and ash engulfs the undercarriage of the fire truck. I gasp for air and pull my hood over my mouth and nose. The noise from the collapse is intense.

Shall I continue?

Q. Sure.

A. Unexpectedly, the loud crashing sound subsides. It is strangely quiet. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I raised my head and move backwards, holding my hands up and touching the bottom of the apparatus chassis. I move about eight feet until I am able to get off my knees. I yelled at Kevin that we are not buried.

The dark brown cloud begins to diminish. I make out outlines of vehicles ahead. Kevin moves next to me. Squinting and peering through the haze, we try to focus our eyes while stumbling and moving north on West Street.

We leave the terrible fire and destruction behind us and start to look for Lieutenant Borega and the rest of Ladder 18. A few minutes later emergency workers and firefighters can be seen moving in all directions. One stops and tells Kevin and me to sit down on the curb. He pours water on our heads, and we try to clean away some of the grit that is lodged around our eyes.

With our vision improved, Kevin and I continue to look for Ladder 18. Lieutenant Borega, Charlie, Harry and Steve spot us about

ten minutes later. It was a tremendous relief we see all of them, especially Charlie Maloney who had left us earlier inside the tower.

We also find Bobby Newman from Battalion 4 who tells us how he narrowly escaped from the collapse of both towers. He surely looks that way with both of his shoes blown off his feet.

I asked Lieutenant Borega where Ralph is. He says, "We have to continue looking for him." Steve mentions that Ralph is running ahead of him when the north tower collapsed but isn't sure where he hid or escaped to. It would be many hours before we heard of Ralph's whereabouts. He ended up in Engine 7 and Ladder 1's quarters on Duane Street after being hustled into emergency pickup truck that headed north to 14th Street after the north tower fell. He's rattled but okay.

Ladder 18 is extremely fortunate. All of us make it out of the north tower. The hours we spent after the collapse seem now to be a complete blur. That destruction and fire after the collapse dulled our senses and overwhelmed

us.

The shock of witnessing the mass destruction and chaos close up after just escaping the towers brought on a sense of futility. What could we do to help? All we could do is just hope that other firefighters, police, rescue workers and civilians made it out. We knew that it would take an extraordinary rescue effort to find and reach anyone alive.

I go on to thank everyone from the 4th Battalion and Ladder 18, from our most junior members to our most senior firefighters who have shown courage, dedication, compassion and humility in the most trying of times.

I am fortunate to work in a great battalion and firehouse that through these difficult times has done what was necessary. Your courage and compassion started the moment the WTC was attacked and lasted through the long sad months of autumn which were full of memorial services and remembrances.

All of you should be proud to be firefighters in Ladder 18, the 4th Battalion, in New York City.

That was my report of what happened.

Q. I can't ask you any questions on that.
That pretty much covers everything.

Is there anything else you would like
to say that wasn't in your thing?

A. No. I mean, the thing was with the
radios we never heard anything as far as getting
out.

Q. Okay.

A. When communications stopped, we heard
nothing as far as evacuate or anything else.

When we got down to the lobby the
second time, we left the building. We left the
north tower through the exit on West Street.
When we left, it was with many other
firefighters, many other people still in the
lobby. No civilians. It seemed to me mostly
emergency workers and firefighters.

Q. Were they trying to get out at this
time?

A. They were in the lobby. I think maybe
they were waiting for other people to come down
or they were waiting for orders or anything else.

When we arrived down to the lobby, we

met 28 Engine, and at that time we were concerned about ourselves, we were concerned about finding Charlie Maloney. We saw 28 and said we're going, we're leaving right now.

They must have looked at us and we saw the severity of the situation and we said we're leaving right now. They followed us out.

Q. They did, huh?

A. They did.

Q. Thank God.

A. Yeah, that was fortunate. The unfortunate thing was that there was a lot of other companies, a lot of other firemen still in the lobby. The only regret I have is that those firemen and fire woman or whatever, rescue workers, they probably could have left also.

Q. Yeah, once it started coming down, it was too late.

A. That's the hard thing about it, knowing that there were so many other people still left in that lobby --

Q. Who could have got out.

A. -- that could have got out.

Q. Thank you for the interview, Hugh.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's 11:05, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110443

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TYRONE JOHNSON

Interview Date: January 10, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 11th, 2002. The time is 10:45 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Division of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER JOHNSON: My name is Tyrone Johnson, firefighter first grade, assigned to Ladder 24.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Ladder 24, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Tyrone, would you please tell your story.

A. Okay. As the day started off, I came to work early. I was milling around house watch. Maybe about quarter to we were in house watch watching the TV. We saw the hole in the building of the north tower. At that time we didn't know what was going on, so we were just watching, watching. Then we saw the plane hit the south tower. After that we got dispatched to go down

to the World Trade Center.

I was chauffeur that day for Ladder 24. We went down the West Side Highway. I stopped the rig maybe two blocks away from the command post. We got our gear together, walked to the command post and waited for our orders.

As we were waiting for our orders, our company --

Q. This is the command post on West Street?

A. On West Street, the command post on West Street. We passed up the Fire Commissioner and Mayor Giuliani at the time. At that time we were standing outside for a little while. It was a bad sight because we were watching people jumping out of the building. At that time they told everybody to go to the back of the command post, which is a garage, to the rear of the command post, and wait for our orders.

Then maybe about five, ten minutes later, we were ordered to go into the Marriott Hotel. At that time the company and three other companies in front of us went inside the Marriott Hotel.

Once we got inside the hotel, we met a chief. I don't remember what chief it was. He gave us the command just relax for a while before you find out what you want us to do.

(Interruption.)

A. At the time we were waiting for our command to go to the Marriott. We went to the Marriott. We got inside the lobby. The chief told us take your gear off, relax, until you find out what you want us to do.

Maybe 10 or 15 minutes later he gave us the command put the gear on because we're getting ready to head upstairs. There were about three companies in front of us. We were the last company to go up the steps. Maybe about five minutes into the process of going up the steps, that's when the building collapsed on us.

At that time we were thrown all around the place. Guys were laying around, covered up. I was messed up and covered up. Beams were thrown. Guys were injured. Just maybe a quick couple minutes -- it seems like a lifetime, though -- a few minutes I uncovered myself, got a hold of the rest of the guys in the company and

we found our way out of the building.

We just searched our way out. We saw the light, and we crawled out of the building.

Q. Did you have to crawl up?

A. We had to crawl down, maybe down half a floor, and then crawl up to get out the door. Once we got out of the building, we started walking towards the water, which is on the West Side Highway. At that time walking maybe we ran across other firemen milling around.

Then we heard another rumble. Then I turned to my left and looked up. It was the second tower coming down. After that we just ran, ran, ran, ran. A black cloud of smoke just caught up to us while we were running towards the water. We got covered again. I got knocked down and covered again. I got up and made my way to the ambulance and I was taken to the hospital.

Basically that's it.

Q. Is there anything else you want to say?

A. I'm trying to think. It was like four companies that were in the lobby with us at the time. I only noticed two companies, Ladder 24 and 22 Truck. The other two companies, I didn't

see them leave the building.

But just to get out of the building, we had to lime over the beams, crawl through holes, all kinds of rubbish to get out of the building. Half the hotel was gone. Half the hotel was gone. We just happened to be lucky we were in the half that didn't fall down. We just climbed out.

Q. Okay. Thank you, Tyrone, for your cooperation.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's 11:05, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110444

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JAMES DUFFY

Interview Date: January 14, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 14th, 2002. The time is 1150 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER DUFFY: James Duffy.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Firefighter third of Ladder 24 of the New York City Fire Department. We're in the quarters of Ladder 24, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Jimmy, if you would just in your own words say what happened that day.

A. We were in quarters when the first plane hit. People came out to the firehouse and told us that a plane had crashed into the twin towers. So we turned the news on.

The engine went down on the third alarm. We were still in quarters. After the engine went down, Captain Brethel and Father Mike -- Father Mike came across the street, got into his car, and Captain Brethel drove Father

Mychal Judge down to the Trade Center.

About five minutes later we saw on TV from quarters the second plane hit. As soon as the second plane hit, we went on the second fifth alarm.

Before this happened we put extra Scotts into the rig. We had a few of the depots. We put all the Scott cylinders from the depot on the truck. We wound up going down West Street. There was traffic on West Street, so we went on the northbound side going south on West Street.

We got down there. We parked on West Street about two blocks north of the towers.

Q. Just a second.

(Interruption.)

Q. Okay. Go ahead.

A. We parked on West Street about two blocks north of the towers. We pulled up. As we were pulling up, 35 truck was pulling up also. They were getting off the rig at the same time we were getting off our rig.

We tried to walk to the command post, which was across the street on the west side of West Street, directly across from the towers. We

were reporting there. We report there. We saw different companies, my old company, 204. I saw 101 Truck. I saw Stackpole there. He was at the command post that day.

I just saw jumpers. I saw about 20 to 30 people jumping out from the upper floors and hitting rigs and the pavement and the ground and apparatuses, and the glass atrium of the Marriott they were hitting. I guess about five or six jumpers jumped at a time.

The chiefs were yelling to get more truck companies. So we sent our fire truck companies in. We were one of the truck companies to go in.

Q. Where'd you go in?

A. We were told to report to the south tower, but the only way to get to the south tower -- you couldn't walk down Liberty Street to get into the main entrance because of the jumpers and the falling debris, so we had to go in through the corner entrance of the Marriott, which is on West and Liberty. We went in there.

Lieutenant McLaughlin was the officer. He looked up and he was keeping an eye out for

debris, because we had all our equipment plus an extra cylinder. So he kept an eye out and he said, "When I tell you guys to run, just run." He was looking up, and we ran right into the lobby.

We got into the lobby, and there was still a lot of Marriott employees still there. They were getting huge things of water. We drank that. We were just waiting our turn to go into the south tower and report to the command post.

We were waiting around. 122 Truck was over there right next to us. 22 Truck was in the lobby also. Then we were just waiting to go into the south tower. As we were waiting, we looked up and all I saw was -- I heard this huge noise, and I saw hundreds and hundreds of people running towards us. They were running out of the south tower to the Marriott, to the lobby.

We just turned. We started to like run also. We got about ten feet before getting blown across the lobby. We got blown across the lobby, just got covered with debris. Apparently after we determined we were still alive, we got up and couldn't see anything at all with the dust and

everything.

One of the guys in the company, Tyrone Johnson, I saw him right next to me. So we stayed together. We were trying to get a way to get out. We didn't know if we were buried alive or not. We thought we were.

We wound up finding -- a metal rolldown gate came down where we came in, I think where we came in. We wound up pushing that up, and then we wound up signaling -- I had a flashlight. I was signaling to people come this way. I know there were quite a few Marriott employees still in the lobby, so we were trying to get all of the employees plus the firemen.

I remember hearing a mayday for Ladder 4. The officer was giving a mayday. He was knocked unconscious, and he didn't know where he was.

After we wound up getting out, we had to climb around this rubble. We were sliding down twisted metal beams and climbing up and just getting through all this debris and trying to help the Marriott employees as they were coming out also with us. That took a little bit of

time. I got separated from Tyrone.

Once we got to solid ground, I wound up hooking up with another guy from my company, Frank Ocello. When we got on solid ground outside, the second tower came down on us.

Q. Where were you when the second tower came down?

A. We were out on solid ground, like right around the area. But when the second tower -- we just ran. We wound up running down towards Battery Park City down by the water. We just ran west, and we wound up down by the water, down by that marina down there.

My mask was blown off me, so we wound up -- there must have been about 50 firemen and probably about 20 cops down there by the water. We all ran into this restaurant. There was a huge cloud coming down to the water. We wound up going into this restaurant. There were civilians down there. I remember there were people with baby carriages and stuff like that. We went into the restaurant until the cloud cleared.

We also asked for a roll call, and they said there was a gas leak at Stuyvesant High

School, so they were closing that area off so we really couldn't get back to the rig. I guess we were on the south side of the towers. So we had to go to the north side to get back to the rig.

So we just did a roll call over the radio, and we just wound up staying, helping. We wound up staying for many hours helping stretch line off the fire boats to the rigs to help put the fires out. That's what we did.

I guess all the other members -- four other members went to the hospital. Me and Frank helped out and we wound up going back to the fire.

That's basically it.

Q. You don't want to add anything else?

A. No. That's it.

Q. Do you know, the four other companies that you were in the lobby with, did they all get out?

A. No, no, 4 and 22 Truck got out that was Frank...no, no.

Q. Jerry Riley?

A. Jerry Riley. And 122 got out all right because I stopped by that night. I stopped by to

see these guys 'cause they were right next to us. So they got out. I think 25 Truck was with those guys, and they didn't get out.

Q. Yeah.

A. They were supposed to report to Chief Barbara in the south tower.

Q. You said a lot of people were running out of the south tower. Any civilians?

A. Yeah, oh, yeah.

Q. Any firemen or all civilians?

A. I just remember people. It's really hard to say at this point. I know there were civilians. I thought I remember mostly civilians. There could have been some firemen. I don't know.

Q. When either tower came down, did you have any advanced warning?

A. Oh, no. I didn't know what it was when we were inside. I didn't know the building had collapsed, actually. I thought it was a bomb. I thought a bomb had gone off. That's why I really didn't know until after.

Q. Afterwards?

A. Yeah, that that's when it came down. I

wasn't expecting that. I thought it was a bomb or something that went off.

Q. Glad you made it.

A. Yeah.

Q. Thanks for the interview. Again, what we're going to do is we're going to try and put everything together and figure out as best we can what happened.

A. Yeah.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's 12:00, and that's the end of this interview.

File No. 9110445

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS SPINARD

Interview Date: January 11, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is 11 January 2002. The time is 1210 hours. This is B.C. Frank Congiusta of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER SPINARD: Thomas Spinard, Engine 7, firefighter first grade.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Ladder 1. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Tom, if you would please say in your own words what happened that day.

A. Well, I just came on that day during a 24. I relieved the chauffeur probably about 8:20 or so. We got a box on Church and Leonard of an odor of gas. So Engine 7 and Ladder 1, Battalion 1, responds. It turned out to be a false alarm.

As we were at the box, a plane passes us overhead real low. You could hear it; you could feel it. We turned around, and it just impacted the building, building one. With that, everybody got on the rig. We started driving.

I drove over to Canal Street and made a left on Greenwich, went down Greenwich, passed right in front of seven, made a right. When I made the right, there was debris, windows, metal and I guess plane debris right on the floor there between seven and I guess that would be six.

Q. Yeah, that's six.

A. Where the foot bridge is, that little overhead. Yeah, I came down and made a right. There's that little foot bridge that went across. I went up West Street after.

Q. This is West Street over here.

A. Yeah, this is the foot bridge over here.

Q. You were at the north; right?

A. We came down Greenwich. There's that little chrome foot bridge. We went under that and found our way over there. We went up to West Street, made a left, made a U turn. I parked right in front of one and hooked up.

When we pulled up in front of one, we saw the lobby windows were blown out already. You could walk into the building without the doors, just where the windows were.

Q. Wait a second.

(Interruption.)

A. I went to West Street and made a left. I made the U turn where you can make the U turn in front of One World Trade Center. I pulled up right in front of the building. I stayed out. I didn't go under the overhang that they had there. I stayed out along the curb where the hydrant is.

I hooked up to the hydrant, and I started stretching back to the Siamese connection on the corner of three, not far away, about three lengths away or so; about two and a half lengths, it was. I started pumping. We didn't wait for anybody's signal. We just started doing our own thing then.

Q. Did you start doing high-pressure pumping?

A. We're not a high-pressure pumper.

Q. Oh, you're not a high-pressure. Okay.

A. No, Engine 7 is not a high-pressure pumper.

I believe we were the first engine hooked up. There was a rig right along the curb there. It was a ladder. It was a tiller, so I

don't know, whichever one, maybe 6 or something.
I'm not sure.

There was a guy laying in front of it, a civilian. We also had two civilians blown out to the middle of West Street on the divider there. It's about two feet high with dirt and grass they were sitting up there. I don't think they walked up there. They were just blown up there. They were all women. They were naked. They were burnt up. They were alive, but they were -- maybe they made it; I don't know. The ambulance took them away. The guy down here who was laying down in front of the rig, the ambulance took him away also.

As I was hooking up, I had debris falling, people, glass, file cabinets. I saw a file cabinet come out. There were just chairs -- they were looking to break the windows with anything, I guess.

I couldn't call the captain. I was trying to call him the whole time. I couldn't get in touch with my captain on the radio. I estimate --

Q. When you were pumping, was water going

into the building?

A. Oh, definitely.

Q. Oh, yeah.

A. Yeah.

Q. You don't know where it was coming out?

A. I don't know what was happening to it.

I was pumping at 200 pounds, and I was getting a flow. Everything was fine, yeah. I had a good hydrant. I had, like I say, three lengths going in. It was right in front on the corner over here, that little set back. It was right there. Yeah, no, it was definitely pumping.

There was a lot of commotion going on. After a while I'm standing out in the street over here -- well, for a short while I was in the rig right in front of the building. Debris was landing next to it. Finally I said this is no good.

I had a proby with me -- I don't know who he was -- and I had my control man, who went into the building, his cylinder malfunctioned, emptied right out in two seconds. So I went to high-pressure hose. He came back out. He went to get another one, but at that point they had

taken the chauffeur's one off the rig already, somebody.

So now he couldn't even go back in because he had no cylinders, no nothing. I said, "Joe, just stay with me." That's what we did. I needed help anyway out there, so he stayed out with me. He watched my back while I hooked up, actually.

Q. Because of the debris, yeah.

A. Because when you went to the building, stuff was really coming down heavy, glass and everything. It was just unbelievable. In fact, even our line was getting little pin holes in it from the glass.

Q. From the stuff coming down?

A. Yeah. We tried protecting it, but there wasn't much to cover it with. Usually we put a door or something. But we didn't have anything.

There was a guard booth in the middle of the street, a glass reinforced like bulletproof. I said, well, this is good for some kind of a protection. It was right in the middle of West Street. So we went in there for a minute

or two. Then I started saying, you know what, even debris is landing close to here. Let's get out of here.

We walked over to the bridge, the --

Q. The north bridge.

A. Right here. I'm not sure what you're looking at. The north bridge.

While we were still in the middle of the street, another plane comes in, makes a big circle, comes around from like the Statue of Liberty direction, and hits two. We can't believe that another one is coming in. Joey got on the radio, "Another plane just hit the second tower." I don't know if he said mayday or what, but he yelled "Another plane hit the second tower."

At that point debris was flying all over, the fireball, fuel was coming down, fireballs were coming down. We just ran west and north. Then after a minute it calmed down a little bit, so we started to come back. We ran over to the rig, checked it to make sure it's still pumping okay and the hydrant's still good, we're still getting good pressure. Everything

was fine with that.

We're still around there. The people who were removed at this point by the ambulance were in the street. I saw three people down there. They were all removed.

I don't know what time later a loud rumble -- it sounded like an explosion. We thought it was a bomb. We ran under the bridge, me, Joe Cassaliggi and two police officers; I think one police officer and one Secret Service. We ran under the bridge. There's a column there, over here, right on the sidewalk, a big six foot round masonry column.

We get behind that, and number two tower comes down and debris comes right around us. Heavy debris is hitting the front of the column, light debris is make it around, dust and little particles, and then the dust cloud hits us. Then it got real hot. It felt like it was going to light up almost.

After a few minutes, we get up. Everybody's okay. We make our way into the American Express tower. We come out the back of the tower. They put us in an ambulance. They

start giving us oxygen, because we were all -- we couldn't even walk we were in such bad shape.

We were in the ambulance for a little while. They said we have to get out and evacuate because the other tower's coming down. We get out. We start running north on North End Avenue. We make it to the construction trailer, maybe over here someplace, one of these blocks. I think it was this block. The second tower, number one tower, comes down.

Now with this I'm still trying to call my captain. I can't get in touch with him. We only had one radio, because one radio we gave to 3 Truck. Being that me and Joe were together -- the control man radio, he took a radio, because we didn't need it, and we gave it to them. That was before anything came down. We were trying to call Engine 7. We never got an answer from them at all.

After the second one, they took Joe away in an ambulance. I said, well, I'm not too bad. I'll stay around. I walked back just to see if I could pull anybody out or put fires out or whatever. There were cars burning in the

parking lots over here, big paper debris fires going on all over the place.

That was it.

Q. I've just got to ask you a couple of things. Did you look at the north tower before it collapsed?

A. Did I look at the north tower before it collapsed? I looked -- no, because once number two came down, I couldn't see anything.

Q. You couldn't see anything. Okay. I thought maybe you could see.

A. I'm looking up at the fire and thinking, wow, we're going to have a tough job there and it will probably burn for days, but I never thought it would come down. It did.

Q. Is there anything else you want to add?

A. I didn't go into the lobby, but I could see into the lobby. It seemed like there were people burnt. Guys were saying there were people burnt on the elevator, people burnt in the lobby. I heard them say there was marble blown off the walls. I imagine the concussion came down the elevator shaft or something and blew everything out.

We were pumping -- we helped 55 Engine who were also in the street. They connected to a hydrant over here across the street. We connected to that and also helped them get a line in. I think there's one over here someplace too. Or 6 Engine maybe had it.

Q. Yeah, 6 Engine said they were there.

A. Yeah, they were right under the bridge; right?

Q. Yeah.

A. So we helped them. And Joe Torrillo was with us too.

That's it. It came down so fast, you couldn't even run. It was about seven or eight seconds. You heard that loud rumble. I looked up, but I still didn't see it come down. It looked like it got fat like a big clump. It wasn't a fire cloud; it was like another cloud around it. I just started running. I said, "Come on, Joe. This way." We ran to that bridge and we huddled, and that's it, it came down right around us.

Any questions?

Q. I was just saying, my brother-in-law,

he has a picture taken from a helicopter after Two World Trade fell. This whole area was engulfed, all the way over to the rivers.

A. You couldn't see.

Q. With dust and dust. I don't know how anybody could have possibly seen what was going on. I mean, the cloud was just -- you could see it right down the street. You could see the top of Seven World Trade in the picture. It's probably one of the famous pictures now that I remember. I'm almost sure it's before number one fell.

A. Because I thought the first 10 or 20 floors, I didn't think the whole thing -- I'm looking at it, and I don't see it missing, because of the cloud. It's maybe 10 floors that collapsed or just the roof. I didn't think the whole thing came down. I still didn't believe it.

Then when I got far away from it, I looked back and said, oh, shit, I see smoke but I don't see any kind of building over there. I went like, whatever, two blocks. I walked up to Murray Street, and you could see a little better

when you're far away than when you're right under it.

But the visibility was zero. It was like a black cloud. We couldn't even find our way to the doorway here. There was a lieutenant that saw us -- that was behind the glass. He saw us run there as it came down. Then when it settled down, he yelled, "Hey you guys. Over here, over here," because we couldn't find our way. Between all this shit that had piled around over here around the column, because the shit was just flying, like tin, like mostly lightweight stuff. None of the heavy beams came that far. They landed around over here.

Then I thought it was gonna light up. That's how hot it got.

Q. You figure everything was heated from the fire.

A. I'm figuring, shit, now I'm going to burn to death. I lived with this, and I'm going to burn. It didn't get that bad. We got out of there, and they worked on us and that was it.

I met up with a chauffeur from 55 Engine. We took him to a trailer here,

construction trailer, cleaned him up. I forget his name. But his eyes were in real bad shape. He wore glasses. I don't remember if he left them on or off, but he was terrible. He couldn't see. Nobody could see, but he was really bad.

The next day I went up to St. Vincent's Hospital. They said a guy had a cornea transplant. It wasn't him. I think it was a civilian. But somebody that had debris in his eyes.

Q. I know I couldn't open my eyes the next day. My wife had to put water on them.

A. I went home that night. The next day they sent me back. I was on 90 West Street, Engine 7, Ladder 1, putting out fires on the seventh, eighth and ninth floor for about three or four hours with nothing, no cylinders or nothing. You just didn't have them.

Q. Part of that dust might have been pulverized glass that nobody --

A. Yeah, right, it could have been pulverized glass. Everything was disintegrated. You know what the doc said? The cement is actually, it's because there is lye in it.

That's rough stuff. When I went to my doctor, he said, "You may develop asthma. Right now you're okay, but your lungs are like borderline." Because I was failing the test that we give. I went to see a doctor at NYU, like an hour-long test, and I just passed it.

Q. What's it called?

A. It was medication.

Q. Like the methyl-something test?

A. They gave me a test. Then they medicated me, and I had to wait 15 minutes and then take the whole test over again. But it wasn't like a cold air thing; it was some kind of medication.

Q. Wheezing.

A. The guy medicates you right then and there. You inhale it, you wait 15 minutes.

Q. Yes. I think they try and bring on --

A. You take it again --

Q. It stops you breathing, though. It tries to make you labor in breathing?

A. No, it didn't do that. I think it tries to open it up, and it sees the difference, tries to compare the difference between the first

and the second test. I was out like five weeks
medical leave. I feel better now, but I still
keep wheezing. I'm still taking the inhaler.

(Interruption.)

Q. Thank you for your cooperation, Tommy.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: That's the end of the
interview. It is now 1325.

File No. 9110446

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL YAREMBINSKY

Interview Date: January 14, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 14th, 2002. The time is 1215 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER YAREMBINSKY: Mike Yarembinsky.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Mike is a firefighter first class assigned to Engine 1 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Engine 1. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Mike, if you could please tell your story in your own words?

A. We got the box at 9:00. Engine 1 got assigned on the fifth alarm. We took the West Side Highway to get down to the Trade Center, and on the way down we saw smoke coming out of both buildings.

At one point as we were getting closer, the smoke looked like it was lightening up. We

thought that they were getting some water on the fire. But by the time we had arrived, it had darkened down again.

We parked the car on the West Side Highway. I don't know the street, but I believe it's the block north of the Trade Center on the West Side Highway, the north tower. Each member took a fold-up and a cylinder, and we started approaching the building.

We entered the building on the west side doorway. We got into the lobby --

Q. That's the north tower?

A. North tower.

When we got in the lobby, the first thing we saw or that I saw was there was a body covered up in the lobby, a dead body. We walked over to the command post. The command post was on the north side of the building in the lobby. My officer went over to the chief and found out our assignment. I don't know what chief. I don't know what battalion.

The assignment was to go with 16 Engine to the 70th floor to operate a line. We took the B stairwell up, and we were making our way up.

There were a lot of civilians coming down. The civilians were handing us water and this and that. The civilians were very calm.

So we continued up. At about the 11th floor, we stopped to take a break. We were maybe on a one-minute break. We stopped on the 11th in the hallway out of the stairwell. Then after about a minute or two, we decided to keep going up.

When we got to 22, we heard there was a Port Authority command post on 22. So we were stopped there. My officer wanted to find out some information, my officer Lieutenant Andy Desperito. He went over to the command post.

We noticed in the hallway that the elevator shaft had been blown out. There was nothing there, no doors, no framing, nothing. When you looked down, all you saw was the cables for the elevator and the brick work that was surrounding.

Q. Was it burning?

A. No burning, no smoke coming out of it.

When he came back, on his way back when he was walking towards us, the entire building

started to shake. This is when we were on the 22nd floor, in the hallway. Initially we thought that our building was coming down or some part of it was collapsing. What we found out right after that was that the south tower had just come down.

So the lights went out in the hallway. I guess the emergency lighting stayed lit in the stairwell. I remember that the civilians at that time were becoming less and less. So we decided it was time to go. We were going to continue up to the 70th floor.

So at that point we had some guys who had dropped their masks and stuff, so we were putting all our stuff back on. We were totally geared up, getting ready to go back up, when a Port Authority man came over to us. He must have been an administrator because he had a suit and tie on. He told us that the south tower had fell, that this was a terrorist action, and that we should leave the building.

We were still going to go up because we were waiting for our own order from the department to go down or whatever the case may be. Maybe less than a minute after he told us we

should evacuate, we got the order from the department. This was as per my lieutenant telling us.

So we decided to go down. We started to go down. It seemed like 16 Engine was in front of us, and me and Lieutenant Desperito were in the back of Engine 1 it was like Engine 16 in front and then the rest of the guys and then me and the lieutenant.

At this point on our way down, there were like no civilians in the stairwell. I saw maybe a couple of stragglers. There were two guys. I asked them how they were doing. They had handkerchiefs over their mouths. They said they were fine. They were walking down calmly.

Those were the only two I saw, until we got to the sixth floor when me and the lieutenant ran into who we think was Josephine, which is who ended up with 6 Truck down there that we found out later. He told me he's going to lend a hand. I don't remember 6 Truck being there. I remember two Port Authority police being there. This is approximately the sixth or the seventh floor.

He said he's going to lend a hand. He

told me go down, get the guys together, move away from the building, and he'd be right down. So I continued down. He stayed there. I got down to the lobby.

When I got down to the lobby, I noticed all the windows had been blown out and there was dust all over the floor, still not realizing that when they said that the south tower had fell, they meant the whole building. Nobody really comprehended that at that point.

I remember looking out to the street, and there was nobody out there. I really couldn't figure out what was going on at that point, why there was nobody there. I said, this is a big operation. There should be more rigs outside, this and that.

I went over. I had left the fold-up because we decided only every second man between the two companies was going to take a fold-up, and the other guys would take cylinders. When we got to the 11th, the guys that had the cylinders took fold-ups. We traded. So I had left my fold-up down by the command post.

I went, I picked up my fold-up. I saw

one of approximate members of my company, Kirk Long. I said, "Kirk, come on. We've got to go. We've got to go out of the building." The windows were all blown out, so you could walk through the frame. We exited the building out of the northwest point of the north tower and started walking diagonally towards where our rig was.

On the way to the rig, we saw the other two guys from our company. They were already outside. We said, "Come on, guys. We have to stick together." We got over to the rig. I threw my stuff up in the rig, my mask, and I threw the fold-up on the rig.

I remember looking up and seeing numerous jumpers, one right after another. I maybe wanted to go back, but it was a crazy thing. You're very helpless.

So we just continued to walk away from the building on the West Side Highway north. I don't know how much time elapsed, but I would say between one and three minutes -- it's hard to judge how much time elapsed -- when somebody yelled out "It's going." I looked up, and I saw

the building started to come down.

I can't tell you what street I was on. I remember running north on the West Side Highway, kind of diagonally towards the water. I turned the corner as the dust was starting to hit me, and I got myself into a building.

At that point all of us had split up. I didn't know where anybody else was. I was looking. There was a bunch of firemen that went into that building also; none of my guys, though.

After that I looked outside. It was pitch-black. A fireman came in with a mask. He took it off. I put it on. I went outside. I wanted to look for the rest of the guys in my company.

A couple minutes passed. The dust started to settle. I took the mask off, dropped it in the street, and I commenced to walk up and down the West Side Highway from Chambers to the site, and I can't tell you how many times, looking for the guys in my company. It had be at least 45 minutes passed, me going back and forth, looking for guys, asking people, "Have you seen anybody from Engine 1?" because I didn't know

what happened.

Finally I did run into two guys from Ladder 24. I hung out with them for a little while. I asked them if they saw anybody. They said no. Actually they said the chauffeur, Joe Falco, from our company got hurt. They put him on a boat to New Jersey. So I knew he was okay.

I guess maybe another half hour passed and finally I ran into the guys from my company. I wanted to find out what happened to the lieutenant. It was still up in the air. We didn't know if he made it or not.

We started walking back to the site with another fireman from 12 Truck, and we were going to help out down there at the site, this and that. We were about a block away from the site when somebody said someone had found Lieutenant Desperito.

So I asked, "You found him? Where is he? Is he all right?" He said, "No, I'm sorry. He didn't make it." I said, "Are you sure it's him?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Describe him." He described him to a T, so I knew it was him.

Q. Where did they find him?

A. They found him in I believe it was the hotel next to the Trade Center. I can't tell you exactly, because I didn't see where they found him. I don't know where they found him, because they had already pulled him out by that point. They said they found him in a hallway in the hotel or near a stairwell in the hotel.

But I had spoken to a Port Authority guy that was with Andy the whole way down. He said that they were trying to get out the mezzanine level, the overpass that leads to the Financial Center. They said that's when the building started coming down. He said they were about ten feet apart. This guy apparently made it, and Lieutenant Desperito did not.

I don't know if they were saying they found him in that section of overpass or maybe he got blown in through a window to a hotel. I really don't know exactly where he ended up, because I heard a couple of different things.

That was a little bit of an emotional impact, so we took a little breather. Then we said, okay, let's see if we can help out down there. We started walking over closer, and then

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's 12:45, and that's the end of this interview.

File No. 9110448

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ARMANDO RENO

Interview Date: January 13, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

A. RENO

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 13th, 2002, and the time is 12:55 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter Armando Reno from Engine 65 in the quarters of Engine 65.

Q. Armando, please tell us the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. We received the box approximately 9:00 o'clock. Already had the rigs fully loaded with EMS equipment and flashlights because I knew from previous experience in '93, I was there for that explosion, you need a lot of flashlights there. Anyway, we had a good response time going down -- heading west up 42ndnd Street to West Side Highway, went downtown. There was really very little traffic.

I stopped by the north tower, let the guys off. I was the chauffeur for 65 Engine and I pulled over to the first hydrant I saw, and I picked up a chauffeur from 1 Engine also. We started to hook up to the hydrant, but we saw a better hydrant closer, right on the corner of Liberty and West. As I went to pull away, somebody took my mask off the rig on the side, so

A. RENO

I was yelling and screaming back and forth, and I couldn't figure out who took it. They left.

Anyway, I went to Liberty and West to look at the standpipe connections there alongside the hotel, and obviously they handled the whole building, all the standpipe connections for the whole complex. Also, I drove a high-pressure rig and I thought maybe, you know, it looks like it might be needed because the 80th floor the plane hit, and the second plane didn't hit at this time yet, the south tower.

I was working by the south bridge. There were numerous car fires there. I was located by the south bridge and the chauffeur from 1 Engine was with me. There were two lengths of a 2-1/2 inch line stretched off the hydrant there on the south side of Liberty Street. We were putting out the car fires, or attempting to, and there was no -- the water had no effect on the car fires at the time. I started thinking about getting the foam off the rig, and I also noticed there were numerous bodies by Cedar Street, and I was thinking of getting the EMS equipment off the rig, putting gloves on and starting to get the bodies, putting them in bags. Well, body pieces. I have a hard time talking. They had to pull a tooth in my

A. RENO

mouth. That's it. I lost a tooth.

About five minutes later I got hit by -- there were numerous people coming out of this hotel, International Hotel there around the corner, and we were directing them to the south side of West Street, directing them west.

Q. The west side?

A. Across, yes, go across West Street, directing them to go across, to make tracks, get going. There were two firemen there with me. I don't know what happened to them. They were also helping direct these people. Also, I had told the chauffeur from 1 Engine, there was a can and a nozzle from those two 2-1/2 inch lines, I mean the lengths, to come around the other side of the bridge and protect the bridge also from the car fires, and he came around, and that's the last I remember. I couldn't tell you any more.

Q. You didn't know about the collapse, like you didn't hear it or anything?

A. Didn't hear it at all. Didn't hear it, you know, what happened there or anything else at all. I remember --

Q. You ended up under the overpass, when you were found, I mean? Where were you found?

A. RENO

A. I was found at the foot of the overpass, sort of right by Cedar Street someplace, around there. Up heading east on Liberty, maybe about 200 feet.

Q. Okay. So what do you remember? You were knocked unconscious. What do you remember next?

A. The next I remember, guys attempting to take me out, actually pulling me out really. I remember telling them stop for a moment and I adjusted my body a little bit and they pulled me out, and the next thing I remember is my son in the emergency room. He's a Fire Department EMS employee and he fixed the collar. The doctors put the collar on me wrong. I had a cervical collar on. They put it on wrong. He had to fix it for me.

Really, that whole week in the hospital, I remember very little. I don't remember seeing any Fire Department personnel other than the guys from my own company coming up to see me, and that is really it. The limousine ride, the guys in 65 Engine picked me up in a limousine and took me home, and even that I just remember a little bit, coming to the firehouse and then going home. I just remember very little of that.

Q. From conversation with other people, do you know what happened to you? After that head beam

A. RENO

collapsed, like what hit you or anything?

A. I don't know what hit me. I don't know. But it really made an impression on my back. I got a couple of wounds, it looked like shrapnel wounds across my back, like a depression. It looked like a handrail, like someone hit me with a handrail across my back. I don't remember. I couldn't remember nothing.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: All right. Well, the time now is 1:04.

Q. Oh, you have something else to say?

A. I think there was a Chief's car. I remember a Chief's car, a battalion car, coming down Liberty Street and turning onto West Street. I remember that pulling around because I was thinking, well, if you stretch a line from the rig because you might need more water, and I was looking back at the rig and I was thinking of all that (inaudible) and where the car was I have no idea, where they came from or where they went or anything. I don't even remember looking at the battalion number on it. That was it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Well, thank you, Armando. The time now is 1:05 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110449

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOSEPH PETRASSI

Interview Date: January 13, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

J. PETRASSI

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 13th, 2002, and the time is 1:15 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Joseph Petrassi of Engine 65 in the quarters of Engine 65.

Q. Joe, just tell us the events as you recall them of September 11th.

A. Okay. On the 11th, at approximately 9:00 o'clock a.m., we got the ticket for the World Trade Center. I believe it was the first fifth alarm. We went up to the west side and proceeded to go to the Trade Center. We could see the fire when we hit the West Side Highway. You could see it from the rig. We continued up and our chauffeur dropped us off at West Street and Vesey. We got off, we grabbed our roll-ups, grabbed an extra bottle and we went into the north tower.

At the north tower there was a Chief that directed the Lieutenant to take his men and work his way up, and that's pretty much what we did. We started heading up.

Q. Did you walk or take the elevator?

J. PETRASSI

A. No, we walked. We had our roll-ups and bottles and we walked up, and I believe it was around the 20th floor that we stopped to take a breather. I'm not sure if it was at the 20th floor or 22nd, that's unclear, but we felt a shake, the building shake, and things just started getting like different. A little bit after that the Lieutenant said, well, we've got to make our way down, and we pretty much took whatever people were in the stairway, came down with them.

Q. Were there many people in the stairs?

A. Yes, the stairs were pretty full.

Q. Coming up and going down?

A. Going down. Well, when we were going up, people were coming down. But I think when we started coming down, it seemed like there was maybe a little more urgency to it. That was it. We made our way down to the lobby. The lobby looked like it was blown out, like the elevator doors. We came out of the building and we were looking up and the tower seemed to blow out, but it was on fire, and the Lieutenant said to run and we ran north up West Street. You could feel the stuff hitting you on the back as you were running. It felt like it was right behind you. I just dove under a truck or some apparatus or something. I

J. PETRASSI

remember diving, but I couldn't even tell you what it was. Then everything went pitch black, everything went silent. I was disoriented. I didn't know where I was. I really didn't know what was going on. It took a couple of minutes to get my thoughts. Then I started calling out to the company. I was calling out anybody from the company. Eventually, we got together and we found each other. That was it. We went to the area. We were directed by some Chief to go north, to keep going north, and we were ordered to stay there.

Q. Okay. When you were in the lobby, is there anybody that you recognized that you knew or a company that was still in the lobby?

A. That I personally saw, no. But there were guys that did see them. I had mentioned at the time that --

Q. Do you know what company?

A. 2 Truck, Captain Ill. I think he might have been like on the 7th floor, that somebody had mentioned that as we were going down they had called to him. Just from hearing guys from other companies who told me they had seen a couple guys from 2 in the lobby. But I personally can't -- I don't remember specifically seeing anyone that I could say that I saw them exactly

J. PETRASSI

where.

Q. Okay. Is that it?

A. Yes.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is
1:20 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110450

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER BRIAN RUSSO

Interview Date: January 13, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

B. RUSSO

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The date is January 13th, 2002, the time is 2:25 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Brian Russo from Engine 91 in the quarters of Engine 91.

Q. Brian, just tell us what you remember from September 11th.

A. Okay. I worked the night tour on the 10th and I was due to get off at 9:00 a.m. I hadn't been relieved yet. When the run came in, actually, 91 Engine responded. I actually responded with the rack unit because that detail had come in. So I responded on the initial fifth alarm for the first Trade Center. I believe that was the north tower. I think the box came in like 8:48 in the morning. We responded.

We arrived at the scene on the corner of Vesey and Church, adjacent to the north tower, across the street, in that direction. There were numerous rigs. It was myself, another firefighter from 91 and a covering Captain. We didn't have any gear. All we had was our turnout coat and boots and helmet, no radio, no masks. So we couldn't really monitor the radio

B. RUSSO

handy-talkie traffic.

Proceeded to walk south along Church towards Liberty Street surveying the scene. There was debris, fires breaking out, numerous bodies. Then when we hit Liberty Street, we made a -- if you're looking south, we made a right onto Liberty heading towards the West Side Highway. This is after the second plane had hit the tower, hit the south tower.

We arrived. We had just seen a fireman get hit by a body, I believe it was Danny Suhr from 216, and they were pulling him away from the building, and we decided to take cover on the south side of Liberty under a scaffolding. There I remember seeing the members of 58 Engine. It was about four or five guys from 58 with their roll-ups, and there was so much debris coming down that they decided to head into I believe the hotel, the Vista Hotel. That's where we left them.

We continued to walk towards the West Side Highway and then over to the command post, which was on the West Side Highway, on the west side, right in front of the World Financial Center. So we met up with the rest of the members from 91. We were instructed to secure a set of irons. We tried to get a couple of

B. RUSSO

extra masks, whatever gear we could find, and we were going to be sent into the north tower with an engineer to search the lower levels.

There were numerous companies there. I remember seeing Chief Ganci, he was there, you know, other guys from 91, other companies. I couldn't tell you exactly which companies were where, but since I didn't have a radio, I couldn't really monitor who was going into what building and who was assigned where.

As soon as we started heading towards the building, that's when the first -- the south building came down.

Q. Which building were you heading into?

A. We were heading towards the north tower, I believe, and that's when the south tower came down. Most of the guys ran back across the West Side Highway into one of the Financial Center subbasements. I guess it was a parking garage it would have been. I guess I was a little bit removed from them, a little further north, so I decided to run up West Street, the West Side Highway there, West Street, and I just headed north. That's where I was going. That's when the cloud hit. I got knocked down underneath the pedestrian bridge. Then you just hunkered down waiting

B. RUSSO

for the smoke to blow over.

After the smoke had cleared considerably, I went back to where my company had been because I didn't realize that they were on the other side of the building. They had gotten out, but I couldn't find anybody. So I headed back south towards the towers. A couple guys from I believe it was -- I remember seeing Lieutenant Ray Murphy from 16 Truck and other men from 16. The guys were kind of a group and headed back down and see if they could find anybody, find out what was going on.

Then just pretty much met up -- I remember seeing Lieutenant Casey from 91, hooking up with him, and I just went down, tried to see if I could do anything, looking for people, victims, whatever, and searching down there. That's when the north tower came down and that's -- I mean, you just headed back up the West Side Highway, once again, trying to avoid all the debris coming down.

After that they decided to pull everybody out and I know -- what building was it? Building 5, I believe, the other tall building there, the third building that came down, they were evacuating people. So everyone just pushed up West Street all the way up

B. RUSSO

towards the high school there. I forget the name of the high school.

Q. Stuyvesant?

A. Stuyvesant, yes. That's kind of where they ran the operation from there. In between the north tower and the south tower coming down, I believe I saw Chief Ganci somewhere along the way there. I don't know where he was heading to, but I saw him somewhere along the line. I wasn't sure. I'm not too clear of when that was. But other than that, that's pretty much it. Besides those few people I remember, everything else was you couldn't tell who was who, and wondering whether we were ever going to find pieces and stuff like that.

Then we tried to get back down later on to do some more searching, looking for people, but they had blockades up by then, so they weren't really letting people back down, and we just sat and waited to do something later on pretty much. That's about it.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay, Brian. Thank you for your help. The time now is 2:34 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110451

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER RICHARD RATAZZI

Interview Date: January 13, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Ratazzi

BATALLION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 13, 2002 and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Richard Ratazzi, firefighter from Ladder 16. The location is the quarters of Engine 39.

Q. Rich, please give us the details as you recall them from September 11th.

A. We had just gotten off duty the morning of the 11th. Myself and Firefighter Curatolo, we were watching the -- we had heard the second alarm on arrival for the south tower. Excuse me. The north tower, the tower that got hit first. We were watching in-house watch when the second tower got hit. When the fifth alarm went in right off the bat, the truck was called. The engine had already been called because of the 10-77.

The truck got called shortly after that when it went to a fifth alarm. Lieutenant Murphy drove into quarters right after the rig had left. He told us we're gonna go down, three of us. We wind up going in the back of a police car. We had grabbed spare mask assemblies from upstairs. We had two of them.

Ratazzi

There was three of us in the car. When we got down there we were parked -- the police dropped us off on West Street and we proceeded down West Street. We checked the rigs. We found 16, we checked the rig. We got two cylinders off of that. We had gotten face pieces here.

We proceeded down. We found a fire patrol. We got a third mask out of fire patrol and we grabbed some tools off of 16, what we could find, and we proceeded south on West Street. We wanted to meet up with 16 and we were gonna go to work with them, if we could find them. We were headed south. I believe, according to the Lieutenant, we were looking for the command post. We came under the north crosswalk on West Street. We got in front of the Marriott when what sounded like another plane coming in. Everybody was -- a group of guys, I can't remember which companies they were all from, everybody just stopped and looked up and that's when the middle of the Marriott blew out at us. Everybody took off running north. At least myself and Rob and Lieutenant Murphy did.

I ducked on the back step of Rescue 1, which was under the north crosswalk. They ducked in front

Ratazzi

of Rescue 1. I don't know whether it was under the rig or in one of the rigs. Then in a couple of seconds everything got black. I heard a gentleman yelling for help. I didn't know if it was Rob or Ray so I yelled out to him, "Keep yelling. I'll find him."

I came across what wound up was either a plane clothes cop, a security guard or a civilian. I'm not sure. He wasn't injured. He just had to find his way out. So I lead him back out to West and Vesey. Once he got out to members out there I turned around, proceeded back down West Street where I eventually met up with Lieutenant Murphy and Firefighter Curatolo who had come across I believe -- it was a fireman. I believe it might have been a chauffeur to an Engine Company. I'm not sure which company. They told me to drop my tools and assist him back out to EMS, because I believe his shoulder was all broken. It was approximately about two blocks back up to Vesey.

I left my tools there. They said they were going to stay together so I left my tools. I took him back out to Vesey. When I came back there was no sign of my tools, there was no sign of Lieutenant

Ratazzi

Murphy or Firefighter Curatolo. I proceeded to look around. There was a lot of rigs in the area. I was looking for flashlights, any lights for people searching or anybody in general. There was nobody around. I eventually came across a chief that came out of the loading dock on West Street and I informed him that I was missing two guys from Ladder 16 and that we didn't have radios, and he informed me that the area had been evacuated and that ladder 16 had been evacuated and they went through the loading dock and out to the water, the Battery Park marina area. I said, "Are you sure?" And he said, "Yeah. I don't know which Chief it was.

So I proceeded down through the loading dock. I went out to the water. I found nobody from 16 Truck, but what I didn't know was Ladder 16 was the last truck at the command post waiting to go to work and the Chief was actually talking about them and not Lieutenant Murphy and Firefighter Curatolo who I was with. So I proceeded assisting a couple of guys, I don't know from which company. I was taking Firefighter Reeg from 44 Engine up to EMS. So I assisted in getting Firefighter Reeg up to EMS. I switched the fire patrol mask for a Fire Department

Ratazzi

assembly that was up there and I proceeded back down Vesey Street, going back towards West Street. I got up as far as a little bus stop and the house for the parking garage or for the parking lot that was on the corner of West and Vesey when the north tower came down.

So I turned back, I ran up Vesey towards the water. I got blown off my feet. I looked up, I was in front of what I believe was the Merrill Lynch building or the entrance. There was a glass atrium entranceway that had the statue of like four people. The four glass doors were open so I ducked into there. I shut the glass doors behind me and a wall of black smoke and soot and everything else came past us. It was about ten to fifteen people came running through the building that I guess were working there. They weren't firemen. They were looking for a way out. I informed them to stay with me, that the street was here and once everything lifted, if you go out, go left towards the water.

When it all lifted, they went left. I hooked up with two guys, I believe they were from Queens. I informed them who we were missing and we went back down West Street thinking they might have come north

Ratazzi

again on West Street. We got up to the corner of West and Vesey. We were up by 5 Truck when a gentleman threw a chair out of, I guess, the 6 World Trade Center. He was on the floor below the top, the second set of windows in from the corner of West Street and Vesey. He threw the chair out the middle window. I remember he was wearing a white shirt, black tie, had a mustache, black hair, like nothing had happened to him. It was about the only windows left intact. Like his office door was closed. So we yelled up to him not to jump, that there would be people coming to get him. Which there was companies on the way down going up there.

At the same time we heard yells for help from the crosswalk, the north crosswalk which had collapsed. We came upon what I believe was a photographer and two other people. The only one that was injured was the photographer whose leg was busted and he was laying against the vehicle. So we went back down Vesey to get a back board by the marina -- by the water. Excuse me. We grabbed two EMS workers, we came back down and we got him on the backboard. He was a rather large individual. He started throwing up, he started going in and out of

Ratazzi

consciousness. We tried to give him a little air from the mask. That made him even more nauseous. He wanted to sit up so we kind of rolled him on his side. After that he was pretty much out of it. We got him up, we tried to get him over the debris. We had a problem lifting him up and over the debris. We yelled for help. Two women Police Officers were standing a little north of us. They finally came over and helped us and we brought him up to EMS up on Vesey and then after that we let the guys know that I had to go get some oxygen because I was having a problem breathing and I was having a problem seeing from all the debris in my eyes.

They informed me -- actually somebody had taken me into one building. When we got in there they informed me that the EMS was moved up towards the Battery Park area. So I went back on Vesey towards the water looking for oxygen and came across Chief Callan. I informed him who I was missing. He seemed to be in somewhat of a state of shock. He was being assisted by I believe it was EMS. So I proceeded north because they were moving EMS north to North End Avenue. So we got up to I guess by the time everybody stopped, I guess it was up by

Ratazzi

Stuyvesant High School.

BATTALLION CHIEF KENAHAN: I think that
might be Chambers.

A. Which might be Chambers and North End,
where I was assisted to by EMS. The lady gave me
some water and I started throwing up. She told me
just keep drinking it and throwing it up if I had
to, to get everything out. She asked me after about
ten minutes how I felt. I informed her that I was
still lightheaded but I didn't have the headache
that I had. I let her know to save the oxygen. I
was gonna go back out towards the street.

I went into I guess where they were setting EMS
up in the building. I found the sink, I was
flushing my eyes out. I got another drink of water,
I was throwing that up. I proceeded out to the
backside of the school, I ran into Firefighter Drum
and Firefighter Meyers from Engine 39. They
assisted me back out to West Street, because I
believe they were evacuating that area. There was a
gas leak.

When I got out to West Street, I guess it was
the Hotzolah Ambulance Service was there. They
wound up flushing my eyes for about 15, 20 minutes

Ratazzi

and giving me oxygen and then they proceeded to take me to St. Vincent's where I pretty much got a scrub down, checked out. They didn't really do anything and released me. I then went into the Emergency Room to see if I could find any members from my company. The only one I had come across was Chief Cassano and I called his family and informed them that he was all right. I stuck with him. He told me to stay with him and he wound up giving me a ride back up to the firehouse here where I stayed for an hour and then went back down to the command center on West 67th Street where we sat there for a couple of hours. That's about it.

BATALLION CHIEF KENAHAN: Thank you for your help, Rich. The time now is 1116 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110452

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JOHN SNOW

Interview Date: January 13, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Snow

BATTALLION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 13, 2002, and the time is 12:22 p.m. and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion for the Fire Department of the City of New York. I am conducting an interview with Firefighter John Snow from Engine 21, in the quarters of Engine 8.

Q. John, just tell us the events as you recall them from September 11th.

A. Okay. We got assigned on a fifth alarm, responding to the north tower. We got down there, I'd say, pretty quickly. I believe we parked the rig on Vesey, near the north passenger walkway. We responded in and we took -- the captain said take some extra oxygen air bottles with us. So we got our roll-ups and we went into the north tower. By then I guess it was really bad on the upper floors, because we weren't inside the lobby long before they started jumping. You could hear the tremendous sounds, hitting the concrete. And it seems like it took a little while before we got orders of what to do. Because when we were in the lobby the second tower had already been hit and people started

Snow

running and yelling, "There is another plane coming at the building." So we didn't know at the time it was finally a military plane. We thought it was another hijacker or whatever. We didn't know it was hijackings at the time so people were just running around the lobby of the north tower, thinking that we were under another attack and then that turned out not to be true.

So I guess it was another, I'd say, ten minutes before we finally got a assignment. I remember the captain saying, I guess the Chief told him, we're not trying to put the fire out now. We're going to try to save people. So we, along with 22 Engine and 13 Truck, we went over to the elevators and myself and I think it was Mike Byrne, he opened -- someone had said that there was someone inside an elevator in the lobby and we managed to pry open the elevator and there was a woman in the back. She was scared to death. We got her to come out. And then 13 Truck got an elevator to work, because we were assigned to go up to the 27th floor of the north tower. This was the out from 13 Truck, he started operating the elevator. Guys went up in two or three trips. I guess within five minutes 22 Engine,

Snow

13 Truck and myself, 21 Engine, we were on the 27th floor. We took it to the 24th or 25th floor and then we walked up a couple of flights and I'm not really sure of the time frame as far as how long we were in searching that floor, but I knew there was a tremendous crash of the south tower coming down, but we didn't know at the time it was the south tower. We just thought it was upper floors maybe that -- maybe an upper floor that had collapsed, because there was a tremendous crash and everybody just hit the deck. Nothing happened after that so we really weren't sure what was happening. We weren't really getting any radio communications and so the Captain just said, you know, we kept searching the floor. It didn't seem like there was anyone on that floor.

And then I guess after another couple of minutes the Battalion Chief, I'm not sure of his name, but I think he was with the 12th Battalion, he came on to the floor and he said, we're evacuating. He said, "This floor is clear. We're evacuating everybody out." So we just started going towards the exit and Captain Burke said, all right -- he figured the stairwells were gonna be crowded. He said, "If we get separated or whatever, we'll all

Snow

meet at the rig." So we started our way down and the stairs were very crowded. Guys were helping civilians still coming down. There was a person in a wheelchair. So the descent down probably took fifteen to twenty minutes. I didn't have a radio, but Mike Byrne had a radio. He said -- I don't know how far behind the Captain was from us, but he had talked to the Captain a couple of times on the way down the stairs on the radio and the Captain said to him a couple of times to meet, we'll all meet at the rig. I guess the last time he talked to him was when we hit the lobby floor. He must have said, I guess, "Everybody meet at the rig."

I remember when we got to the lobby floor 65 Engine had just gotten down also and that's when one of the guys of 65 told me the other tower had collapsed, because I still hadn't known it up until then. And we saw some guys from 2 Truck in the lobby. They said they were just waiting for their Captain and they were gonna be getting out.

So there were still some people from those fire floors that were trapped upstairs, I think a couple of people still hadn't jumped. Somebody was saying in the lobby, "Somebody got hit about a jumper. You

Snow

guys gotta be careful even leaving the building."

So we started moving out towards West Street.

It was myself, Mike Byrne, Jimmy Foley started walking towards West Street and I guess we just hit West Street when we heard the roar or the rumbling. We just looked back and heard the rumbling of the tower coming down and everybody just ran up West Street towards where an overpass was.

Q. Was that the north overpass?

A. Yes. Heading north. It was kind of like you knew that the dust and everything was catching you. The guys just started diving, tried to dive behind something and then dust and other debris just overcame everybody. Everybody was just trying to get cover behind something and then just, you know, it kind of took a long time for all of that to lift. And then everybody was just trying to think of where everybody else was. Did all our guys make it, get out? You know, just communications were pretty bad so we just tried to hope that everybody got out. It took a while before we finally gathered all the guys back together again and the only guy, you know, that eventually hadn't got out was the Captain. We weren't sure about our chauffeur because it took a

Snow

while before we were ever able to get in contact with the chauffeur, because he was running from the rig because our rig got pretty much destroyed and he said he was lucky. He had just walked away from the rig a little ways when it was coming down so he had a chance, he was able to run far enough so he didn't get hit with all the debris.

Then just everybody -- the next couple of hours it's kind of foggy, but everybody was just kind of like walking down towards the collapse. You know, trying to find out where everybody was. So everybody was pretty much in shock or whatever. That's as much as I really remember about everything.

BATALLION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay, John.

The time now is 1232 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110453

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PATRICK CONNOLLY

Interview Date: January 13, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Connolly

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 13, 2002 and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion for the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Patrick Connolly from Ladder 16, in the quarters of Ladder 16. The time now is 1135.

Q. Patrick, just tell us the events as you recall them on September 11th.

A. Basically I live in Queens and my house looks right at the tower, and I was jogging and not too far from Haz-Mat 288 and saw the first explosion and immediately, you know, saw what was developing and knew it was something pretty serious. My brother Brian who works for Ladder 17, he was at home so I decided to run to his house and just let him know, make sure he was aware of what was going on. When I got to his house we turned on the TV, and when we turned on the TV we saw the second plane hit.

So we decided right then and there that we were just gonna go in on our own accord and he had said to me he was gonna go in. He had to go to the Bronx to get his bunker gear. I said I had been issued my

Connolly

two sets of bunker gear the night before from the Quarter Master. So I said, "We'll just use my stuff." We used a 1620 key over on haz-mat and got a helmet and a pair of boots from -- because you only get bunker gear with a pair of boots and a jacket, two sets. So that's what we did. We went to haz-mat and they were all gone already at that stage. We looked on the vacation list, took the helmet from one of those and we made our way through the Midtown Tunnel. My brother drove us -- my other brother drove us to the Midtown Tunnel.

We got off there, we jumped into a police bus going in and that police bus drove us to the intersection of Canal and West Broadway. Just as we were entering into the Midtown Tunnel the first tower collapsed and, you know, kind of just getting ready as we were riding in and my brother's telling me, "I don't know what to expect."

And we got off at Canal and West Broadway and we're looking down on the tower. There was a lot of debris in the area. From up there, from the collapse of the first tower and we decided to walk. We you can walked about a block and then a Police Ford Explorer picked us up. It was a mounted,

Connolly

actually that had a horse carriage on the back of it, and they drove us three blocks north of the Trade Center, which would have been the intersection of West Broadway and Warren Street. And we got out there and he said he couldn't take us any further. So as soon as we got out of the car then the debris field was a lot thicker and basically you could see the tower burning and stuff, but you couldn't really -- you couldn't pick out fine details and we just saw people running around aimlessly. So we were just grabbing them and shouting at them and pointing them in the right direction. A couple of people couldn't -- they were just sitting down. They refused to get up. We picked them up and carried them out a little bit and then they kind of got the message and they moved on of their own accord.

We walked down and we saw somebody and we asked them where the firemen were and they said down and to the right, which would have led us right to the command center. Down to Vesey Street make a right turn. That's what our approach was. When we got to the intersection of Park Place I think it is and West Broadway there was a EMS bus there, a EMS SUV

Connolly

and we looked inside and we saw a Scott mask and we saw a search rope and we saw a medical bag. We thought they would come in handy so we broke the window and took that stuff out. The Scott mask, I tested it and it didn't work so I just left it where it was. We took the search rope and we took the medical bag, and we just proceeded to walk south on the north basically, but walking south towards Vesey Street.

So when we come to the intersection of Vesey Street and West Broadway, you have to go left or right. We were going right heading towards the West Side Highway and as soon as you turn right, about seven steps after you turn right there is an overhead foot bridge that would lead from 7 World Trade Center into 6 World Trade Center. We were coming over just there, right there and as we approached that, the underside of it, I said to my brother, "I said, this thing is gonna come down on top of it." And he said, "Then we'll just run to the other side of it." So as soon as we got under it we ran to the other side of it and the debris was falling so we were kind of cautious when we came out. We came out and maybe about one step past it

Connolly

and as we came past it my brother had said to me -- you know, the whole way down he was explaining to me that this is nothing like what you deal with, what you're expected to deal with. He said, "There is a lot of people gonna be hurt on the outside." He was a policeman so he was all concerned about a secondary device.

So he was saying that, you know, he kept drilling that into my head: "Secondary device," "Secondary device," "Secondary device." You know, it's not over. There is something else that's gonna happen. He goes if that first tower came down, he said, this might go down too. He was telling me not to go into the buildings. He said, basically, if you see firemen we're gonna look for them and help them immediately and if we see pedestrians, whoever we saw we're gonna help them.

Basically, when we got underneath to the other side of that foot bridge, to the west side of that foot bridge, he said to me, "You know, we should probably split up at the next corner in case we get jammed up in this thing together." And I was just like, you know, totally naive. I just said, "No. You're crazy."

Connolly

And as soon as I said that, I felt the ground shake and I looked up and the whole top of the tower was starting to fall and my brother turned and he didn't even look up. He turned and there was already about a foot of debris on the floor and as he turned he went to push off with his legs, but he was pushing too hard and he slipped in place and fell. And I reached down and as I turned again I reached down and caught him right in the back of the pants and I threw him. I lifted him off the ground and I threw him up to his feet and I threw him too hard and he actually fell down again underneath the foot bridge and he got up again and I got up again and I basically came -- the foot bridge was there. I got to the corner of West Broadway and as soon as I got to the corner of West Broadway, I made a right turn. As soon as you make a right turn on West Broadway right there, not even a foot north on West Broadway there is a service entrance to 7 World Trade right there and I saw another fireman standing right there. He was standing right there. Chides me like "In here, bro. Dive in here." The door was closed, but it was inset, you know, 18 inches as is normally, a normal 36-inch door would be. As I make

Connolly

a left, I saw my brother who was directly behind me. And I just left my feet. I drove for the one corner and as I dove for the one corner I saw that my brother was out here, right out in the wide open spot.

The next thing, I just started getting crushed from above. I was just getting hit. But nothing hard. Like just, you know, considerable smacks and stuff like that, but nothing that you couldn't take. Nothing that was pulverizing me. And I took my T-shirt, shoved it into my mouth, held my nose closed, took one last breath and waited to die.

Apparently it got a little bit harder and the noise got really severe. It sounded like a severe wind storm, a severe rainstorm. The next thing I know, like maybe a half a minute passes by and it suddenly got very quiet again. So I get very quiet. I kind of threw my shoulder like that and all the things that were on top of me kind of shifted off and I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe that you're alive. I tried to scream for my brother, but I had the shirt in my mouth. I tried to pull the shirt out a little bit, and all the air was forcing into my mouth so I shoved it back in again.

Connolly

I knew that the door was there on my left-hand side. That's the only thing I knew. I didn't see that other fireman. The who was calling me, I didn't see him. I didn't see him, I didn't hear him, but I knew the door was there. So I hit it like that (indicating), like three times like that and then I heard three knocks coming back from about 5 feet off, which was where my brother was. So I kind of felt better about that. At least I felt he was okay because we couldn't communicate really through talking and I just kept hitting the door and hitting the door and hitting the door, and eventually maybe ten minutes later I felt my brother's arm grab my arm. So of course obviously you're emotional, you're grabbing each other and hugging each other and going through the whole gamut of emotions and while we're doing that, the door pops open.

We're not sure, you don't know what to think. Is it an explosion? Is the building starting to settle and forcing the door out? We didn't know. And then as the door opened up the fireman that was calling me was on the other side of the door. Somehow he forced the door and was pulling us into

Connolly

the space, into the -- now basically into the belly of 7 World Trade and he explained that he was a Fire Marshal, named Joe Brosi and my brother Brian, he knew Joe before he was a Fire Marshal working 17 truck. So he and my brother, they were partners. It was like a real strange coincidence. Obviously a very happy one again to get together. The radio, Joe's radio, he was the only one that had a radio. He was the only one actually working that day. His radio was starting to go crazy. I heard maydays on his radio and I heard, you know, there was a lot of confusion on the radio and I was all excited and they thought, Brian and Joe thought that we were in a fall out shelter, but it was getting dustier and dustier. The conditions were getting -- the visibility was starting to deteriorate a lot.

The only thing I knew, that I wanted to do was I wanted to go back out the door that we came in and make a left turn and walk straight up West Broadway out to safety. They were a little bit more controlled. They decided to stay put about five minutes. And think things through and they were gonna go down. There were some interior stairs and they were gonna go down to probably more like a bomb

Connolly

shelter area and I think when Joe looked, it looked like it was destroyed. So we decided that we would tie the search rope off to the doorway and the three of us hand in hand decided that we would walk out. And as we came out we started to walk north and slowly but surely and up and over and under steel and cars were -- cars with tires and cars were popping and they were just starting to light up spontaneously and there was near zero visibility at this stage. It was better though than it was right after the collapse. And then we walked up two blocks. We walked up, there was a hot dog stand there. We broke the window in the hot dog stand, took bottles of water and we were washing our eyes, because our eyes were burning. We made a left on Park Place. We got to the corner of Park Place and I'm not sure what street that is right there, but basically that intersection here, right in that corner right there there was an office building and we ran into that office building and we ran in and we were washing our face and getting all this stuff out of our eyes and we reached over and there was a doorman there and we asked him, "Is everybody out of the building?" He said, "Well, I just want to check

Connolly

the second and the third floor." So we said, "well, we'll just get cleaned up and we'll help you out." So we went in, we got cleaned up and we helped him out searching the building. Then we came down again. When we came down, we're right over here at this stage (indicating).

Q. So that's the corner of Park and -- we're not sure what street that is.

A. Right.

Q. Okay. It's between West and --

A. -- and West Broadway.

Q. And West Broadway. Okay.

A. And one block -- exactly one block west of West Broadway or one block east of the West Side Highway. And right when we were there at that corner you looked back on what is going on and somebody had screamed that one of the buildings, surrounding buildings was coming down as well. So we told that guy, "You gotta come with us." He was pretty hesitant. We said, "You gotta come and that's it" and he decided to join with us and he started to move.

As we started to move north on that street I ran into staff Chief Mike Butler, who was a friend

Connolly

of our family's and immediately grabbed him and he was looking -- he wasn't really in great shape either. He just basically was kind of all dusty just like we all were and just kind of trying to put some sort of plan of action into place and he said, "Pat" -- he said, "Pat, you set up over there for ladders and give me another line over there for engines." And that's what we did. We just tried to get people together and get ladders on one side and engines on the other side, when a call came through again that there was a bomb in the area. Then we all got to the West Side Highway and we ran towards Manhattan community college. That's pretty much where we stayed then like everybody else until about midnight that night when we were one of the first companies to go back in searching on the main pile of debris. And that's pretty much it. I didn't see any -- you know, because of the timing of everything, approaching it from the north side it was really, really quiet. There wasn't many -- there was no apparatus at all on West Broadway. There was nothing at all. No firemen really at all on that street. I didn't see any of them at all. I didn't see any of them in front of me. I had hoped

Connolly

that we were gonna meet up with them.

Unfortunately, I don't have any information regarding to who and when and where, and that's about it.

BATALLION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay, Pat.

Thank you for your help. The time now is 1150 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110458

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TIMOTHY BROWN

Interview Date: January 15, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

T. BROWN

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Today's date is January 15th, 2002. The time is approximately 9:20. My name is Battalion Chief Art Lakiotes, safety command, New York City Fire Department, conducting an interview with --

MR. BROWN: Tim Brown, OEM, detailed out of Rescue 3.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: Pertaining to the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Tim, if you would, just take me to when you first heard about it and then how did the day's events unfold for you.

A. OEM's offices are in Seven World Trade Center, so we were there when the first plane hit. I was on the third floor. I was eating breakfast. The electricity went out in the building for about three to four seconds, and then it rerouted and came back on. I knew something major had happened, although I did not feel any vibration or hear any crash from where I was sitting.

The folks that were in the cafeteria where I was that had a window seat all got up

pretty much at once and started running. I asked them what happened. They said a plane just crashed into the tower, which was the north tower.

So I ran down the escalator to the lobby level, where I saw my direct boss, Calvin Dreydon, who is the deputy director for operations for OEM, going down to the street level. He told me to go up to our office on 23 and make sure that we were getting our EOC up and running and that our communications was being properly supervised. We call it our watch command.

So I went up in the elevator to 23. First I went to my desk, got my portable radio. It's a police radio, fire radio and OEM radio. I went into our watch command. The supervisor, Mike Lee, was there running operations, so we were fine there. I went into the EOC. We had the supervisor, Mike Berkowitz, there running that, so I was comfortable that we were doing our job properly.

I went down to the street level. There was a lot of debris falling in the street, which

is Vesey Street. My car was parked on Vesey between the federal office building, the post office, and Five World Trade. I went to my car to take off my tie and my shoes, put on boots, helmet, and a Mayor's office jacket.

I went back to the corner of West and Vesey, where the police department was calling mobilization. Our car two, John Odermatt was there. I told him that I was going to go through Six World Trade into One World Tower to the fire command post.

I walked in the walkway between five and six to get a three-sided look at One World Trade Center to see what it looked like. The whole plaza area was burning debris, plane parts and bodies; a lot of fire in the plaza area.

I communicated with a Port Authority cop who yelled at me and told me to get out of there, it was too dangerous. Of course he was standing there. I don't know who that guy was.

I went into the lobby of One World Trade Center. A lot of people were self-evacuating very orderly, quickly. People were helping each other, and they were streaming

out as quickly as they could.

The one thing that was limiting their escape the most was probably the size of the escalators. They were bottling up at the top of the escalators, trying to get on the escalators, trying to get down. But it was orderly.

I believe you have to go down a level to get to the fire command post. So I went down that level. I went past the core of the building where the stairwells were. There were a lot of firemen there. By "a lot," I would probably say 30 or so firemen there.

The people I remember seeing were Terry Hatton and Chris Blackwell. Terry Hatton from Rescue 1 and Chris Blackwell from Rescue 3. I gave them both hugs. Terry said to me, "I love you, brother. It might be the last time I see you." Then he went in the stairwell. Then Chris Blackwell looked at me and said, "This isn't good, Tim." That was the last I saw him also. Those are the two guys that I remember seeing, although there were a lot more people there.

From there I went to the fire command station where my boss was, Calvin. I believe at

this point Rich Schirer was there. I think I saw the Commissioner there. I think we had a tape, kind of, of the people that were there.

Q. Yes, I think so.

A. Yeah, I think the tape came in after I left.

Q. Yeah, it could be.

A. I was probably there for three minutes at most. We did right away -- one of the thoughts that crossed my mind almost immediately was to get air cover from the military. We weren't sure this was a terrorist attack, but we knew there was a good possibility that it was.

So we had sent that message pretty quickly back to our communications folks to try and get in touch with the White House and with FAA and try and get some help.

There were a lot of people streaming in and out, a lot of firemen coming in.

The second plane hit. Again I did not feel that. We did not know that happened until a fireman came into the lobby and told us that another plane had hit number two, the south tower. Calvin directed me to go to the command

post in the south tower to help the Fire Department with their operation there and to let him know everything that was going on.

I'm not exactly sure how I got there. I remember going out through a broken window and running I believe south along the West Street side of the complex as fast as I could so I wouldn't get hit by anything.

I remember running across a parking lot. It was across from the hotel, which would have been the southeast corner of Liberty and West. There's a parking lot there. It was near the pedestrian walkway and all that.

Q. There's a large parking lot.

A. Right.

Q. The building that was up there, would it be a Church?

A. It was gone from there.

Q. Yes, obliterated.

A. Okay, okay.

Q. It was just a very huge parking lot, black top.

A. Right, okay. I was over there.

Q. I was a lieutenant in 10 and 10.

That's why I remember a lot.

A. Okay. So this is your neighborhood, then.

Q. Yeah.

A. Okay.

So I remember running across a lot of debris. I didn't have on fire gear, so I remember trying to avoid the fire as much as I could. I ran into the doors of the Two World Trade on the Liberty Street side.

I saw Chief Burns inside there. He was the first fire personnel that I saw in the lobby. I asked him if there was anything I could do to help. He was like, well, it's just like -- there was nothing anybody could do except try and get people out.

So we tried to encourage -- I remember seeing a six-person team from ESU in that lobby. I directed them to wait. I directed them to wait and not to go upstairs until they reported in to Chief Burns so we had some accountability of who they were and where they were going to go. They finally did communicate with Chief Burns, and then they went upstairs.

Again, an orderly evacuation of two. A lot of people were leaving.

We finally set up -- prior to this I believe it was the west side of the core of the building there were elevators. Someone had come to me and said that there were people trapped in one of those elevators.

So I ran around the corner, and the hoist way doors were open, but the elevator car was only showing about two feet at the top of the door. You could see all the legs of the people that were in the elevator. I would guess there were about eight people in the elevator.

The elevator pit was on fire with the jet fuel. People were screaming in the elevator. They were getting smoked and cooked. There weren't a lot of firemen there at the time. I grabbed some of the Port Authority employees and asked them where the fire extinguishers were and told them to get as many fire extinguishers as they could so we could try and fight this fire. As they were doing that, firemen started showing up, and I started asking them to get big cans, let's try to put this fire out.

I turned around, and I came face-to-face with Mike Lynch from Ladder 4, who I knew. I worked for Ladder 4 for a year. He was one of the young guys there then. I knew Mike was a very competent guy. I said to Mike, "You've got this?" He said, "I'll take care of it." I left the elevator knowing that he would take care of it.

I went to the command board -- which before this I went to the phones which were in the southeast corner of Two World Trade in the lobby area, trying to call the White House and trying to call Albany and trying to make sure that we had some kind of air cover and some kind of help in the air.

I could not get through to Washington because of the things that were going on. I did get in touch with S.E.M.O. up in Albany, and they said they were already ahead of us and they had already spoken with people, trying to get us air cover.

So being comfortable with that, I went to the command board which they were setting up right next to the doors on the Liberty Street

side, the south side of Two World Trade, inside the lobby. At that command board were Chief Burns, Chief Jack Fanning, and I remember seeing Carl Asaro also there. So at this point I just stayed in the background, because things were crazy.

Someone, a fireman, came in through the lobby, through the doors on the Liberty Street side, and told us that there was already a fireman who was killed on the Liberty Street side by a jumper, a guy from 216. Although we knew it was serious, we knew that disaster was beginning to happen.

Now the people coming down the stairwells were not so healthy anymore. A lot of people coming down were burned very badly. A lot of people were broken and bloody. There were people helping people, like carrying people.

We had been directing people to go to Seven World Trade where we had set up a triage area, and I was directing them to go underground as much as they could to get to seven. But a lot of these people that were coming down now were not ambulatory and overwhelmed. So the lobby

started filling up with badly injured people, people that were dying.

So watching all the confusion, I always try to think of what I can do to help. I said, well, we have no EMS in the lobby, and we're going to have to move these people or everybody is going to be stuck in the tower and we're not going to be able to evacuate.

I told Chief Burns that I was going to go find EMS and bring them back into the lobby, which is something that saved my life. I went out to the Liberty Street side. I saw Mike Lynch again at Ladder 4's rig, which was pulled right up next to the building, taking the Hearst tool off the rig.

He yelled to me to help him get it off the rig and carry it in, so I started running toward him. Before I could get to him, another fireman had come up and started helping him. So I said, "Are you all set?" He said, "I got it."

I ran to continue my mission to find EMS. I found EMS staging underneath the pedestrian bridge at West and Liberty. I saw my friend Charlie Wells. I got under the pedestrian

bridge where they were standing so we were protected, and I said to Charlie, "We need you guys in the lobby of number two." He looked at me like I was crazy. He said, "All right. Just give me a minute to get helmets on people, and we're going to go in with you."

So I waited I'm thinking around two minutes there. He got two paramedics, himself and me. I said, "Okay. Follow me." We ran to the south side of the hotel to stay close to the building, trying not to get hit. We ran along the edge of the hotel.

When we ran by the southwest corner of the hotel, I noticed that the doors to the Tall Ships restaurant were wide open and there were people inside there.

As we ran towards the rear, which is the three side of the hotel, and rounded the corner to go into Two World Trade Center, in the doors, we heard the roar above us. I know I never looked up. I don't think anybody ever looked up. But there was no question what it was. It was a very tremendous sound, which I think we hear on the tapes.

So we just turned and ran for our lives. Now it was the flight/fright thing, because everybody knew we were all going to die. We ran back along -- I knew right from the start that I was going to go into the lobby of the hotel to try and get protected.

As I ran by the medics, I yelled at them to follow me. Charlie and one of the medics, who I don't know their names, followed me into the lobby of the hotel. The other guy ran back toward the pedestrian bridge. Charlie tells me everybody lived of that group.

We ran into the lobby. No sooner did we get into the lobby of the hotel, which was crystal-clear when we went in, then it went completely black in an instant with the dust.

The roar was just getting louder. The dust started blowing in our faces. I'm guessing around 30, 35 miles an hour the wind was. Everything started blowing toward us that wasn't nailed down. You could not any longer run into the wind because you were getting pummeled by stuff. You couldn't see anybody to communicate. You couldn't hear anything. It was becoming our

grave.

So I turned around and started running back toward the door where I came in. Intellectually I knew we couldn't go outside, because we would get killed by the steel. So now I knew we were trapped. I wound up crawling on the floor as the wind got stronger and the roar got louder.

I found what I'm guessing was a 12 by 12 boxed out steel column, which I tried to become one with. I got as close as I could to it. I hugged it, hoping that anything would tent over me. I just held onto it.

I had a helmet on. The helmet got blown off by the wind. I'm no meteorologist, but I'm guessing that the wind at its height was around 70, 75 miles an hour. I had to hold onto that steel column with all my might so I wouldn't get blown out into the street, not realizing it was probably all over, thinking about my brother and things like that.

I thought it lasted four minutes. Somebody told me it lasted a much shorter time than that. But it stopped. You could hear an

eerie silence at first, and then you could start to hear people starting to move around a little bit, people that were still alive. I was amazed that I was alive.

You still couldn't see anything. I went back toward what I thought was the door where we had come in from Liberty Street. As I got over there, I ran into a truck with its lights on. By the front of the truck, I thought it was a box truck. I did not recognize it as a fire truck, although it could have been. I thought it was a bomb. The headlights were still on, very eerie.

I turned around and ran the other way, thinking that it was a bomb, telling everybody to run the other way. We ran into a steel rolldown gate that was down. Someone had said we can get out this way, so now there were more people around.

So all the men -- I couldn't tell you if they were civilians or firemen. It seemed to me there were a lot of civilians here. Our fingers were going underneath the door. We tried to lift it up. After we got it up two inches,

you could see all the fingers coming the other way, because there were people trapped on the other side of it.

We got that door up about two feet, and there was a girl behind us that said we found a way out. So everybody formed a chain. There was a fireman that knew he was already outside in the rubble, but he was okay. He was screaming at us to come toward him, "Come this way. Come this way."

So we went that way, which was the West Street side of what was left of the building. We went across. Then I just wanted to get away from the building, so I ran across all the rubble over to the American Express building, where I went in the lobby there. I just wanted to get to the river and to be able to get a view of what was going on.

I went into that lobby, and all the doors were locked. I couldn't get through those doors. I tried to break the glass doors, and I couldn't break them.

I had the police and fire radios in my back pocket, so I did not hear what was going on,

really, on them. I had the OEM radio in my hand, and my boss was calling for help. He was trapped. That's what brought me back to reality.

I went back out to West Street, ran north on the West Street side over the rubble, trying to find him, thinking that he was dying, trapped in the rubble. I went by Chief Feehan, who I know for a long time, shook his hand. He said "Be careful, be careful," to me. I kept running. I remember him being on West, north of the American Express building. He was alone at the time.

I went up to Vesey Street and made a left going west on Vesey Street toward the river. I found Calvin at four World Financial Center. A fireman had already rescued him and pulled him out. He was with EMS.

Then my other boss, car 2, John Odermatt, grabbed me and said, "Timmy, we have to go and try to reestablish city government. You've got to come with me. Calvin is okay." So we left Calvin in the hands of EMS and went back north on West Street.

At some point -- I'm not sure where --

I either went in Barclay Street or Murray Street over to West Broadway and trying to find our command bus, which was a little bit further north on West Broadway. I started walking north on West Broadway when number One World Trade Center started to collapse.

I looked back over my shoulder. Everybody started running. That collapsed. I knew that my friends were in there. I just ran north on West Broadway. I used a telephone, a land line, because I couldn't use the cell phone to call my brother to tell him I was still alive. That phone call was made an hour and 42 minutes after the first plane hit. So I know that's the time line.

Then we wound up just up at 24 and 5 with the Mayor and other folks up there. I saw Terry's wife up there. I had an unhappy encounter with her.

Basically that's it. We just tried to regroup after that. That's everything I remember.

Q. A lot of guys that were in the --

A. Lobby.

Q. -- restaurant, 131?

A. 131 Truck?

Q. Yeah. I was wondering if you ran into them.

A. They were in the lobby and they were --

Q. I guess the gate was between the restaurant and the hotel lobby. When they closed the restaurant, they use the gate to segregate the restaurant from the rest of the building.

A. Oh, okay.

Q. They said that they got that up. They went out to Liberty Street on the corner.

A. Oh, okay. So they were coming toward me as I was coming toward them.

Q. Right.

A. You couldn't tell who was who or anything like that.

Did any of those guys die? Mostly everybody that was in that lobby area --

Q. In that general area of the lobby, the guys got out.

A. Further north than the lobby.

Q. North and south. It seemed like you were in the middle.

A. I think I was in the south end of the lobby. That's that part that's still standing.

Q. I'm saying, if you were on the south side or the north side, it looks like you --

A. Lived.

Q. -- survived.

A. In the middle where two came down, it sliced it in the middle. You have guys that were in the north part that lived also?

Q. Yeah, Tommy Gallagher was in the north part, and Brian, when the first collapsed.

A. Right. Then the second one. I heard there's videotape, actually, of number two -- of the hotel in between the collapses. So you have two parts of the hotel standing, and the middle is gone.

Q. Yeah.

A. You can see it?

Q. Photos, not video.

A. Okay. Photos.

CHIEF LAKIOTES: That concludes the interview. It is approximately 9:45.

File No. 9110460

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KENNETH ESCOFFRY

Interview Date: January 16, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 16, 2002. The time is 1320 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER ESCOFFRY: Firefighter first grade KENNETH ESCOFFRY.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Firefighter Escoffry is assigned to Ladder Company 20 of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Ladder 20. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Kenny, in your own words, if you will just tell us what happened that day.

A. On the morning of September 11th about 8:45, I was relieved, and a few of us were standing in front of quarters when we noticed a plane came directly over the firehouse maybe around 8:45, somewhere around that time. One of the guys mentioned that the plane looked like it was really low. Before we could really think of

what he said, the next thing we heard an explosion. We saw the smoke.

So the guys in the firehouse suited up and jumped on the rig. We didn't get a run on the teleprinter yet, but they went towards the direction. I guess they got the run as they were moving towards the direction.

At first we thought it was just a plane crash. Four of us were left in the firehouse. We turned on the TV, and we noticed that the plane hit the World Trade.

(Interruption.)

Q. Okay. Go ahead.

A. I was saying that the plane had crashed into the World Trade. Four of us jumped in the hazmat rig, and we proceeded down to the World Trade to see if we could help. Two guys went up the staircase from the squad, and myself and George in the truck, we reported to the command station, because we had no tools, no radio, no masks, nothing.

When we pulled up, we saw heavy fire, smoke. People were jumping. So we figured we couldn't do much up here without equipment. So

we decided to go to the command station, where Chief Hayden and Chris was, and we asked Chris, the aide, if he knew what floor 20 was on. I believe he said they were up on the 27th floor, somewhere up in that area.

Q. This was in the north tower, the command post?

A. The north tower.

We hung around in the north tower in the lobby for a while. There were jumpers. After a while, body parts were flying into the lobby. Chief Hayden asked myself and George to check out a report of a fire that was on the second floor, the mezzanine.

We went up to the mezzanine level, and in the corner, which was exposure 4, we noticed it looked like it was jet fuel that was just running down the side of the building. The fire wasn't spreading or anything.

Within that 30-second time we were up there, an EMS worker asked us to come into the staircase to help him remove a person that collapsed in the staircase. After going into the staircase, within another minute or so, there was

a loud explosion. I believe that's when the second plane hit.

Q. Let me ask you a question. Do you know what staircase it was? Was it A, B, C staircase?

A. That was the staircase in exposure 4. I'm not sure.

Q. You're not sure. Okay.

A. Once that explosion happened, the door to the staircase slammed shut. When we went back and pushed the door open, we couldn't breathe. The dust particles was all in the lobby. So we kept the door closed, and people that were evacuating down, we wound up evacuating them off that staircase, through a hallway that led back to the exposure 1 side of the building.

We evacuated them from there to the second floor, which was the mezzanine, and took them down to the lobby. We took them around to the mezzanine and over the catwalk that went to the building north of tower one, which I believe that's probably building six.

Q. The one that goes across?

A. Yes, north. The catwalk that you could actually see the cars pass under.

Q. Okay. This one here that goes across West Street?

A. No.

Q. This one over here?

A. Yeah, this is West Street. Where is tower one?

Q. Right here.

A. The catwalk I guess went across this street here, Vesey and whatever street this is.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. We led the people across, and they evacuated that way.

About an hour later me and George decided let's go out, because we were having difficulty breathing because we didn't have a mask. On the way out between tower one and six, we heard something like an incoming missile, and we started to run. That's when the second tower came down.

Q. Tower number two?

A. Right. That was the first tower that came down.

I was knocked down. When I got up, there was a hose -- I followed a hose out to the

street with water flowing from it. So I washed my face and washed out my mouth. I knew George was behind me, so I called back. Finally he answered me. I told George to come towards my voice. We went back to the pumper and he washed his face, washed out his mouth. We proceeded to wet down our hood and put it over our mouth and nose.

We walked it seemed like about five or six blocks before we could even get to somewhere that we could breathe. We got up and started to walk back and forth looking for our company, hoping that maybe they got out. So we spent maybe the next 45 minutes washing up and walking up and down the side, hoping that our company would come out.

Q. This is West Street?

A. Yeah, West Street.

We didn't see our company. Nobody saw them.

I guess somewhere by the time we washed up and were walking up and down the west side looking for our company, the second one came down. So we never really got back towards the

tower. We wound up walking to 1 and 7 and tried to get back in touch with Ladder 20. We tried to call back at our company, but all the phones were down so we couldn't get in touch with anybody.

So we decided to walk to 8 Truck. We walked to 8. Lieutenant Woods and some of the other officers were over there. That's when I realized from watching the TV exactly what happened. At first I thought maybe just a section of the building came down. Once I saw the TV, I realized the whole building came down.

That was it. The whole day we never caught back up with 20. Somewhere later on in the day we worked our way back to 20 Truck.

Q. Is there anything else you want to say?

A. The farthest we got was maybe like the third, fourth floor, helping to evacuate the civilians. Like I said, we had no lights. The civilians were coming down the staircase. It was dark. We spent maybe 45 minutes in the staircase helping people finding their way out. It just got so bad, we couldn't breathe anymore. We decided to start making our way out. Fortunately we did. Maybe 30 yards from the West Side

Highway, that's when the first tower came down.

Q. Thanks a lot for your cooperation. I appreciate it.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's 1345 hours, and this concludes this interview.

File No. 9110461

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL Morabito

Interview Date: January 15, 2002

Transcribed by Elizabeth F. Santamaria

Morabito

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 15, 2002. The time is 1030 hours and this is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview.

Q. Would the following individual please state your name.

A. Michael Morabito.

Q. Michael is a fireman third grade, assigned to Engine 228 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Engine 228 and this interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Mike, if you would just tell us what happened in your own words.

A. Okay. I was working and the alarm came in. It was a third alarm at the World Trade Center. We didn't even know a plane had crashed into it. It wasn't like a rush right away. We were relocated to Engine 205. So we were hanging around a little bit getting everything ready to go and then we saw on the news that a plane hit the building. So then we responded immediately.

Morabito

We reported to Engine 205 and while we were in their quarters we saw the second plane hit and then shortly after that we had responded to Manhattan. First they told us take the Brooklyn Bridge. We started to go towards the Brooklyn Bridge. And then there was a little confusion. They said, no, take the tunnel. So we were stuck traveling back and forth, thank God, and we had taken the tunnel, the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel.

As soon as we got out the entrance, out on the Manhattan side of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, we got hit with the first dust cloud and we had no idea what happened. We stood there for like a minute or two and then the dust settled and then we got out and helped two other people that were there. There were some civilians, there was some Port Authority. We gave them masks and everything to help calm everybody down a little bit.

We spent maybe five minutes there or so and then on the radio they said to proceed to the staging area. So we got back in the rig. We headed up West Street as far as we could. I don't really know what street we were on. I think it was maybe West End something, and parked the rig because we

Morabito

couldn't go any further. And we grabbed all our gear and started walking to the building, towards the towers. We were probably about a block away when we heard a giant rumbling sound. It sounded like jets were going overhead and then we looked up and we saw the tower start to fall and we just ran. We outran the dust cloud and got back in the rig. As soon as we closed the doors on the rig we got hit with the second cloud and then it was pitch black for like five minutes. As soon as that cloud cleared we got out and there was some personnel, Fire Department personnell running around.

We saw one of the doctors from Metro Tech was there. He was bleeding a little bit. We talked to him. He said he was okay and stuff. And then a lady came running over with an infant that she had covered up and she said, you know, she was nervous. So we got her in the rig. We gave the baby oxygen and we covered it up so that no more dust would get him. And we helped a few other people in the area. And then when everything settled down a little bit we grabbed our gear again and proceeded to head toward the Trade Center again.

We were waiting, we hooked up with another crew

Morabito

or two and we were down by where marine 6 I think was, by the water and we were waiting. We didn't know where to go. We were waiting to respond. We had no orders by anybody yet.

And another Engine Company had come with just three guys on it. It might have been a satellite or something, because they had all hose on the rig and they said they needed two guys to help. So me and I think it was a control man who was a detail that day had gone with them. We told our boss we were gonna go with them. We had our radio, we would stay in contact and we're going with the other company. We had taken a hand line and went up West Street, started putting out all car fires and we were heading all the way down to the municipal building. When we got there we were with rescue 5 and we were holding a hand line with them as they were doing the search. They found one fireman. That guy that they pulled out with his tooth broken. I don't know what his name was. They found him, so we helped pull him out. You know, made a chain, took him out, and then we held the hose line. It was me and I think two guys from Rescue 5 and the rest of Rescue 5 was searching and then there was a fear of collapse of

Morabito

the municipal building, the building with all the scaffolding. So they finally pulled us out of there and then we pulled back, and then we had a little break for a while.

At that time, I hooked up with my original company, all my guys and guys from the house after recall. And me and one of the guys from here, Mike Lyons, we went back in searching. We went through all the rubble and went under the overpass where all the rescue rigs were and as we were searching I came across another firefighter who was -- who said that they were trapped. Ladder 5 was trapped in the tower, what was left of the tower. So me and Mike Lyons went over to -- climbed to where the stairwell was and we hooked up with a guy from Rescue 5 and a guy from Rescue 2 and we helped rescue one civilian who was trapped on the 6th floor and pulled him down there from --

Q. From the south tower?

A. From I think it was the north tower.

Q. South tower would have been like on Liberty Street and West?

A. I really don't know where. It was where the guys were trapped, who brought out the lady.

Morabito

Q. Oh, okay. The north tower.

A. Yeah. It was the north tower. That's it.

That was what, Ladder 5?

Q. Ladder 6.

A. Ladder 6. They were below us with the lady. The lady was down there. We saw her. There was already a couple of guys there with her and she was calm and they said they had a chief down there and they were trying to get out the guys from Ladder 6. So we had to climb up and this guy is trapped at probably about the 7th or 8th floor and he was just sitting on a piece of concrete when the whole building came down. He was just lucky when he survived. And a guy from Rescue 2 climbed up above him, tied him up. I had shimmied out like a piece of conduit and he lowered him to me and I pulled him over, because we were over a big hole, and I pulled him over to Mike Lyons and a guy from Rescue 5 and pulled him over and, you know, his ankle, I don't know if it was broken or if it was fractured and we helped 6 carry him, because at that time there was really no one else there and we carried him up and down this big crater and everything. I don't know how far we went. It was pretty far. But then by

Morabito

the time we got across, then there was a whole line of firemen coming off so we passed them on to him and then we had gone back to our company and we waited there for a while and then 7 came down. They were running back in. I think we --

Q. They don't really want to know about 7. Wow, that was pretty good. That was good you were there. When you were coming up West Street, was there a large number of civilians coming down West Street?

A. Yes. When we first got there, after Tower 1 had collapsed, a lot of people had run through the tunnel and we were trying to calm everybody. We thought that the tunnel had got hit. We didn't know what happened. We were just trying to tell everybody to stay calm, don't even go anywhere yet. You know, we don't know if the tunnel is hit or what they're hitting.

Because there was a lot of rumors going around as you were going. That they hit the White House, they hit the Pentagon, they hit Air Force 1.

"Right now you're safe, so stay here and we'll see what's going on."

Then we proceeded up West Street. Yes, there

Morabito

were a lot of civilians but they were in an orderly manner. They were walking all along -- I know when we got out and we went by the water over there, I don't even know what that is. I guess that's behind West Street. Where Battery City is or whatever.

Q. The Hudson River.

A. Yeah. They were all walking by there. They were all in an orderly manner and everything and then we were just telling them to head towards Brooklyn. That's where everybody was going. And babies or babies and kids and people like that we were putting onto Marine 6. We told them just to get on Marine 6. Because they had some stuff there to help them, because there was still a lot of debris flying in the air and everything.

Q. Very good. Is there anything else you want to add?

A. No. That pretty much does it. I'm trying to think of stuff --

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: That's right. Thanks for your corporation. That was pretty interesting. The time is 11:00 o'clock and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110467

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER GEORGE HOLZMAN

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

G. HOLZMAN

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 17, 2002. The time is 1215 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. Firefighter George Holzman.

Q. Of Ladder 47 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Ladder 47. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. George, if you would please tell the story in your own words.

A. We relocated a few minutes after 9 o'clock to Ladder 6. We headed downtown. I was the chauffeur, so I was very aware of the traffic situation and just trying to get down there. I think everybody else was anticipating what had just happened. We hit quite a bit of traffic on the way down, especially near the Triborough Bridge. We finally got on the FDR. We got about, probably down to the low teens, when traffic just about came to a halt. We decided at that point to get off the highway and filter our way through the side streets.

G. HOLZMAN

When we got off the highway, the two towers were still standing, we realized that another plane had hit at that point or something else had happened to the other tower. We proceeded towards 6 Truck. Joe Lowney, the Lieutenant, knew the area from when he was a proby, so he was getting us through the neighborhood. We stopped to help a lady who wasn't necessarily involved in the Trade Center collapse, but just had some medical problems from I think all the upset --

Q. Give me a second George, to make sure -- okay, go ahead.

A. We stopped the rig and everybody got off the rig. I moved to the officer's seat to monitor the radio, trying to take down whatever information, which was lots of information at that point, where the command post was. I think we all just naturally assumed that we weren't going to be spending a lot of time at 6 Truck, considering what had happened.

At which point, the first collapse occurred, or I assume that from all the Maydays and because we were surrounded by buildings, we weren't aware that the whole building had collapsed. We all just assumed that a piece had fallen. There would be Maydays because of

G. HOLZMAN

that. We probably were with the lady about 5 to 8 minutes. I called the Bronx dispatcher, I asked him to send us an ambulance, realizing that Manhattan really had their hands full.

Before I knew it the guys were getting back on the rig. Apparently the lady felt a little bit better. There was a clinic in the nearby area. We boarded the rig and headed towards 6 Truck. We just pulled up to 6 Truck. We were trying to get in the front door. We received a run to somewhere in the area of Fulton and Broadway. I parked the rig by St. Pauls Church. We were confronted with quite a few injured people, people that just were confused and dazed by the whole set of events. I think in a lot of ways, we were as confused by the impact of this, not realizing that the whole building had actually come down. We just assumed that a piece of the building had come down.

We worked on those people. We helped them in whatever way we could. The officer and the irons and can team went into the building, searching for this smoke condition. Radioed out to me that tell the dispatcher that 1020, the box, it most likely was just smoke from the area.

I started walking back towards the rig, the

G. HOLZMAN

OV and the roof guy were helping me take care of people and I started walking towards the rig to tell the Manhattan dispatcher what was going on. When what we thought was another plane had hit another building, because we were on the side of the building that was pretty smoky and debris, cloud. The remainder was in our face most of that time. We assumed or we thought that there was another explosion, another plane had hit. We didn't know what had happened. To be quite frank with you, I don't think we realized how close we were to the Trade Center, geographically speaking.

At which point we grabbed everybody we could and headed probably about a block into Fulton where we found an office building that we could get into. We took whoever we had with us in there. We took all our medical equipment. I radioed the Lieutenant to stay in the building. That I don't know what had happened but it had been catastrophic, to stay in the building until we figured out what was going on.

We stayed in communications all the while, just letting everybody know we were okay and we were still around. We were in the building for probably two or three minutes when we realized that there were probably a lot more people outside. So we donned our

G. HOLZMAN

masks and the three of us went out and we brought in probably another 6 or 8 people, including a quite pregnant Asian lady who I kept screaming at her, please, whatever you do lady, don't have this baby. I think she actually believed me. She realized that this wasn't a good time to be having a baby.

Anyway, we got everybody straightened out. I think there was one Firefighter we brought in, but you know, it's a shame how you just have no notion of who these guys were. He had quite a bad laceration to his hip. He went through a pane of glass in a building, one or two buildings up, and then for some reason retreated from there and then we found him out in the street, so we tended to him. I guess all together, we had about 15 people in there. Within probably 10 or 15 minutes, when things started to clear, we decided as a group to meet up with the officer and the irons team and we asked this group of people that we had to take the pregnant lady to, I think Downtown Beekman or whatever hospital was there.

Q. Beekman.

A. Because we were about two blocks away or somewhere in that area, so as a group they headed off, because there were quite a few injured and what not.

G. HOLZMAN

So everybody kind of helped each other and they took off. We met the officer. We headed towards the buildings, the Trade Center. We went down -- I believe we said Barclay to Church with our first attempt to try to do something, but it just didn't seem like there was any potential to do anything there. We looked up towards West and we saw an engine and a truck on the corner and we actually saw a Battalion Chief, so we decided let's head over there and we will get some direction and see what we could do.

The Chief asked us to force our way into any buildings we could. They wanted to charge the stand pipes or to have the ability to know where the stand pipes were and eventually charge them. We stayed in that area doing that for a while as well as searching under vehicles and whatever else we could do. Whatever you could do was what we did. There was no master plan at that point.

We stayed there for quite sometime. There were a lot of vehicle fires, there was a lot of debris that we were searching for people. Mostly civilians we thought at that point. That was I think what was in our heads, people that had fled the building. Well, I will wait for that. I mean we were looking for

G. HOLZMAN

civilians in our heads.

We stayed there for quite sometime when I don't even know who, I think it was someone, Lieutenant Lowney spoke to, asked us to leave the area, they were concerned about 7 World Trade Center collapsing. At that point we made our way back to actually where our rig was, was right by St. Pauls Church. We went to the command post, told them we had a rig, which they seemed to be happy to hear. It seemed to be the routing point for all the recall guys.

So we stayed there for not too long a period of time, but I want to say about an hour, somewhere in that area. Finally they told us to head over to the command post on West Street or the West Side Highway, I guess, where we went. Probably within a half an hour of getting to there, the 7 World Trade Center collapsed, so it must have been late afternoon at that point, 5 o'clock or somewhere in that neighborhood.

We stayed there probably an hour. We had something to eat, we got our eyes cleaned out. Guys got cleaned up, got out of their bunker gear, washed off, tried to clean their bunker gear as best as they could. I guess about an hour after that, we were sent down to the command post, which was right by the

G. HOLZMAN

Customs building. We stayed there probably half an hour, 45 minutes I would think. We were hoping to be able to accomplish something, but they felt that we had been there all day and they really wanted to get some fresh troops in there.

They sent us back to the command post, where we probably spent another hour and then were finally relieved. We figured we would be going home and they sent us back to 6 Truck. We went back to 6 Truck. We stayed there for the tour. We were relieved in the morning and that's really it.

Q. Very good. Anything else?

A. No, not really, other than it just being a horrific day and an awful lot of peoples' lives.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: I know, and thanks a lot for being candid with us. We are trying to get something organized here. Thank you very much. This concludes the interview.

File No. 9110469

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER KEVIN HOWE

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

K. HOWE

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 17, 2002. The time is 15 hundred hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. Kevin Howe.

Q. Kevin Howe is a fireman in Engine 84 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Engine 84. This interview is regarding events of September 11, 2001. Kevin, in your own words, if you would say what happened on that day.

A. Okay. I'm going to start in the fire house. Approximately 8:50 I heard a second alarm announcement in the Borough of Manhattan, 1 World Trade Center and the voice -- the men put on the TV at that time. We were watching and watching it and a short while later as we were watching it, we see the second plane hit the building and we knew it was terrorism, and now it wasn't just a small plane that hit. That's what everybody thought initially.

When that happened, my wife called on the phone. She's, you know, worried, don't get killed.

K. HOWE

You make 60 thousand a year. With that I was on the phone and we got the bee-boops. I just said I got to go. What it was we relocated to 16 Engine on 29 Street on the east side. So when I got out to the rig, I was the back up chauffeur or so I thought that day. I went out to the rig and Mike Oates was getting ready to drive. He had just completed chauffeur training school and I remember it had a real meaning then, because I had already been told I was driving and I put my stuff on the rig like I'm a chauffeur. Now the chauffeurship had a real meaning this time, you know, you're gonna do the work.

But anyway, in the confusion, I left behind my bunker coat and I put my stuff on the rig, or so I thought. Mike Oates was the new chauffeur. He took us down to 29 Street. We backed into quarters and you know, I was just thinking I got to get a coat, I got to get a coat. I pulled off, what turned out to be Princiotta's coat from 7 Truck, is it.

Q. 7 Truck.

A. I took his coat and we went down and we watched it on what seemed like a couple of minutes in their kitchen. Then we got the bee boops to go to the Trade Center. From there I remember it taking a

K. HOWE

while. It seemed like a long time to get across town. We got across town, went down the west side, West Street, and I was in the back of the rig sitting backwards and I don't recall knowing if the building had collapsed.

I got there. We pulled up several blocks away on West Street and I got out of the rig and there was dust everywhere and we went and did what we had to do. We had to get our rollups and bring an extra air tank. Myself and 84 Engine started making our way towards tower number 1, which we had a pretty clear view. I'm not sure how close we got to it. As we were walking up closer, there were a lot of civilians going the other way and we were walking up and my thoughts were how the hell -- how am I going to make this climb. This is at least 70 stories, no way. I'm thinking no way. I know there is a way. 10 floors at a time, you take a break. With all the equipment and rollups, that was my chief concern at that point, like how the hell am I getting up there.

As we got a little closer, I remember seeing how much fire there was and there seemed to be like 8 floors of fire and I thought there can't be any stand pipes system. As I am having these thoughts as and I'm

K. HOWE

walking up, and we are getting close enough where I'm actually seeing -- I saw two images jump from the building, you know, 2 people, civilians and I'm thinking to myself this is fucking horrible, this is the end here, you know.

With that, I was able to -- I'm hearing like a rumble and I'm looking up and I'm seeing the antenna start to do this type of nonsense, swaying a little bit it seemed, and sure enough the building was coming down. That was tower number 1, the north tower. As it started coming down, we saw this ferocious amount of black cloud, a brown cloud that was chasing everybody. It was chasing us also. I remember I just dropped my equipment. I don't know what I did with my mask, which probably turned out to be foolish. I was just trying to lighten up and get out of the way. We ran. I ran along with everybody else. Our entire company. Getting out of the way of that building, because at that point, you don't know what's the collapse zone -- you don't know if it's doing a straight down number or if it's going to cantilever and topple. You really didn't know what the collapse zone was and you were basically running for your life.

I remember getting -- running like a couple

K. HOWE

of blocks and trying to find the Engine, regrouping and try to regroup and see what our plan of attack is now. We are all shot. It's still -- it's very fuzzy. I met up with the rest of the company and I remember we took the rig. We got on the rig. Did we get on the rig? We went around -- we did, we went around to the west. I don't what the last street is.

Q. Towards the water?

A. Towards the Hudson River. Drove down towards Vesey Street and we are taking a look and we made a left on Vesey. At that time there was a lot of fire going on. I think it was the Customs House was roaring. The 7 World Trade Center was roaring. All we could think is we were an Engine Company, we have got to get them some water. We need some water you know.

With that, we positioned the rig, I don't know, 3 quarters of a block away maybe. A fire boat was going to relay water to us. I don't know if I have things in the right order, whatever, if we were getting water out of a hydrant first. Jesus Christ --

Q. Captain said you were getting water. You were draining a vacuum?

A. It was draining away from us. Right. We had to be augmented. I think that's when the fire boat

K. HOWE

came. I think the fire boats supplied us. Of course you don't see that. You just see the (inaudible) way and you know, we are hooking up and we wound up supplying the Tower Ladder there. I just remember feeling like helpless, like everybody there was doomed and there is -- I just felt like there was absolutely nothing we could do. I want to just go back a little bit.

When we had first entered down Vesey Street, I heard a command post or a Division looking for 6 Truck and this came to my attention because that was my former company. I was with 6 Truck and 9 Engine up until March last year when I transferred in. I was very worried about those guys in 6 Truck, yet I didn't want to abandon my men with the Engine, because we were doing our job. We were supplying the Tower Ladder and we were doing our own thing.

I don't know what else. Do you want me to keep going what we did that day?

Q. Pretty much -- after the collapse, that's pretty much. You know, like after you were relaying water, that's enough.

A. It was just -- I remember a couple of guys coming from on the roof. This guy Russell and myself

K. HOWE

went out looking. We were searching for anybody or anything we could find. It was just mayhem and it was just a feeling of helplessness. If there was anybody, they were underneath big beams and girders and there was nothing humanly possible. I got to say, shortly after I heard them looking for 6 Truck, my radio died, my control man radio. That died and I wasn't getting any more transmissions. Guys were saying that they had to turn their radios off or whatever, because they were hearing people that were missing or lost or you know, or hurt. I guess it's kind of a blessing I didn't have -- my radio wasn't working and I wasn't aware that it wasn't working right away because we were all together.

So I'm trying to think of anything else, if I left anything out. I finally called my wife at 1:30 and she was happy to hear from me. I called from the bar across the street.

Q. The Mexican place?

A. I don't know, was it a Mexican place?

Q. I called from the Mexican place.

A. It looked like it was a nice bar you know, before it got taken over. I don't know. I'm trying to figure anything else I can remember. I remember them

K. HOWE

bringing -- they had an ambulance on Vesey and I believe it was Chief Ganci's body that they put in the ambulance. That was the first casualty that I saw.

It was just a very depressing day. It was a feeling of hopelessness and helplessness.

Q. I think we all kind of felt that.

A. You know, I don't know. Initially when you were there, you thought -- I said to myself there is no way anybody survived that, there is just no way.

Q. By some miracle 6 Truck and 39 Engine --

A. That was an incredible miracle. I saw the guys later on. I gave them hugs and everything. I was like, I couldn't believe it, you know. I don't know if it was the 6 -- guys that were stuck or the 6 recall guys, you know what I mean, but I was real happy to see them. I can't think of anything else that --

Q. That's good. That's good. That's all right.

A. Yes, I guess so.

Q. Okay. That's fine.

A. If you need anything else. I do remember us being pulled off the pile. We were down by the pile to search or looking around.

Q. Searches, searches?

K. HOWE

A. Right. Searching for people or whatever. I remember being pulled off the pile like just before. It wasn't just before. It was probably an hour before 7 came down.

Q. It was about an hour before. Maybe an hour and a half.

A. I remember when 7 World Trade came down and everybody was like shell shocked. I mean this was a 47 story building. We all ran. We were like oh, my god, here we go again. It just gave us the creeps. But -- I don't know. After that -- and I really don't know what else.

Hopeless and helpless. Those are the catch words of that day.

Q. Yes, I think everybody.

A. You got to be getting tired of these interviews right?

Q. Well, you know what it is. It's somewhat interesting. Everybody saw a little something different, so to me it's interesting.

A. I know there is stuff I'm leaving out. Not consciously, but I just know things that we were doing and you know. Yes, I just remember that dust. It was (inaudible) masks. I was like, you know, I had to

K. HOWE

ditch my mask trying to lighten up along the way.

Meanwhile I should have been wearing it, you know what I mean.

Q. It was still a good idea to get away from that.

A. This is true. I was thankful, very happy to get home the following morning, you know. Thanks a lot.

Q. I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

A. Let's get some coffee, coffee break.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: This concludes this interview. It's 1515.

File No. 9110471

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS DONATO

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF McGRATH: Today's date is January 17th, 2002. The time is 1612 hours. I am Battalion Chief Jim McGrath of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Tommy Donato from Ladder 85. This interview is taking place in the quarters of Ladder 85, and it's regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Tommy, if you will please state your name and just recall the events that took place as best as you can remember them.

A. My name is Tommy Donato, Ladder 85.

As far as I remember that morning I came into work my regular tour. I started seeing some stuff on the TV of the first plane. I remember calling my wife and saying most likely I'm going to get called there and I'll call you later, is basically what I said. That was before we got actually called to the job.

Then after the second plane hit, Ladder 85, as far as I remember, was sent. As we were on the Verrazano, I remember looking over to the left and seeing the billowing of smoke. I

believe one building had collapsed by the time we were on the Verrazano. I'm not positive if that actually happened or not.

We get to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. We were going to go through the Battery Tunnel, but because civilians were walking out, they said we couldn't go in. So they turned us around, and we took the bridge, the Brooklyn Bridge.

As we get over the Brooklyn Bridge, we headed down -- I'm not really sure on the street. I remember heading down the street and pulling the rig over to the side. We filled the stokes basket with up with as much equipment as we could possibly fit of what we thought we might need. Then we walked.

We walked down the street that we were parked on and waited for what to do, an assignment what to do. We were standing around not knowing exactly what to do.

Q. Could we stop for one minute. I'm going to see if I can quiet the outside noise.

(Interruption.)

Q. Okay. Now you can resume, please.

A. So then a couple firemen were

approaching us. They said the chief said they were commandeering some radios, so I had to give up my radio. They were taking them from truck companies that had multiple radios. So we were left with I think two or three radios after that.

At the time we were told to go set up the tower ladder -- I think was around 11:00; I'm not sure -- to put out one of the fires that was burning in one of the smaller black buildings. I think it was World Trade Center Five or Four maybe.

A couple things that stuck out in my head on that when we went to go set up, Ladder 7, which I worked with a couple years ago, was set up, and they were dumping water on the fire. Then one of the members from Ladder 7 came up to me and said something like, "Did you see the guys from Ladder 7?" I said, "Yeah, they're right there." He said, "No, those are the guys that just came down. Did you see anyone" -- he named the names of the guys that were working that day. Then I said I didn't see anything.

Then we started to set up our tower ladder. Something that sticks out in my head --

I'm struggling with this, but what sticks out in my head is as the tool measurers were coming down and we were setting it up, this salty old fireman comes up to me and he said, "Did you check the manhole covers?"

In the middle of things falling all over the place, buildings burning, this guy remembered to check to see if the tool measurers were coming down on a manhole cover, which kind of surprised me.

So then they aborted us from setting up the tower ladder because they were worried about now seven coming down. So then they pulled us away. This is where I kind of start remembering a lot.

We came around, I think we took Murray Street down the west side, and we stopped the rig and pulled over to the side and we all got out of the rig. We were standing, waiting for seven to come down. We were there for quite a while, a couple hours.

During that time a couple of the members felt like we were being useless just standing around. We wanted to do something. So

we started trying to walk down, trying to get into the pile. We kept on being turned around from chiefs, because they didn't want us near seven.

Prior to seven coming down, this is the first chance that we -- we were starting to get hungry, so one of the members that I was with, he said we heard there was a box of fruit or bananas down the block, so we started walking down the block.

As we were walking, we had to actually get a little closer to seven. So we turned and looked at seven, and that's when all the marble siding started popping off the side because it was starting to go down.

I think we ran down I think it was Vesey Street -- yeah, it was Vesey Street that we ran down. Seven came down. We ran back to 85. As far as I remember, 85 came down -- I don't know what this street right here is.

Q. Greenwich. That's Greenwich.

A. We made our way to the base of seven. That's where we set up the tower ladder.

As we were coming down Greenwich -- was

it Greenwich? I'm not sure. It was either West or Greenwich. There was multiple cars on fire throughout the block. All the hydrants, there was no pressure in any of the hydrants that we were around. There was a pumper set up on one of the streets, so we tried to stretch a line off the pumper because there was no pressure in the hydrant.

Tommy Delpino, the firefighter who was driving that day, suggested that we tap off the standpipe system in I think it was The Bank of New York, or maybe it was 75 Park Place. It was one of the buildings that was there. So we started stretching a line off that.

By then the radios, the batteries were dead. We had no communication. My captain at the time was on the front of the line with two other guys that I don't know. They're from a different company.

So I was actually acting as the radio communication between Delpino, who was at the standpipe, and the captain who was at the end of the line. He would tell me stop the water. I would run back and tell him. Then I would run

back to help with the line. Then I would run back and tell him to shut down.

We worked our way putting out the car fires, which I don't know if there was ammunition, because there was a lot of cop cars, but there was explosions. Tires were exploding. There had to be about 15 or 20 car fires. We put them out as we worked our way down.

So then we were able to get 85 to the base of seven where seven had just collapsed. We set up 85 and started dumping water. It had to be around 7 or 8:00, and we stayed there until 7 in the morning the next morning, alternating the members in between the bucket and just dumping the water on the base of seven from the north side.

That's basically how the day went.

Q. Okay. By any chance do you remember who you gave the radio to when you gave up your radio earlier?

A. No, no.

Q. No?

How about the pumper that you said was on Greenwich Street, do you remember what company

that was?

A. It seemed like it was an extra pumper, because it was like a 505 or a 515 number.

Q. Do you remember the name of the companies of anybody else that you operated with or saw besides you had mentioned 7 earlier?

A. No, I don't remember companies that were on the line. I don't remember any companies that we worked with that day. The guy from 7 was kind of walking around in a daze, looking for his guys. In fact, I met him like twice or three times that day. He kept on asking me, "Did you see anyone from 7? Did you see anyone from 7?" He mentioned the guys who were working that day.

When I rotated, I stayed in my same group, group 2. So Danny Suhr who was in 216 I worked with all the time, because I was in group 2. We lost him. All the guys in 7 were guys that I -- some guys you don't see. Some groups you just hardly work with. These are guys that I spent time at their summer house and stuff. So when I heard that they were missing, I was quite upset.

Q. Had you seen any of the guys from 216

at all?

A. 216, no I did not see any of them.

Q. Is there anything else that you can think of that might be helpful to us or that you would like to add?

A. No, not really.

Q. Okay. I want to thank you very much for all your help in providing us with this information.

CHIEF McGRATH: This will conclude the interview, then. The time is 1622 hours.

FIREFIGHTER DONATO: Thank you.

CHIEF McGRATH: Thank you.

File No. 9110473

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER THOMAS ORLANDO

Interview Date: January 18, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 18th, 2002. The time is 1200 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER ORLANDO: Thomas Orlando.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Thomas Orlando is a firefighter first class in Engine 65 of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Engine 65. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Thomas, will you please tell your story in your own words.

A. From when we left here?

Q. Yeah, from when you got the run, yeah. Did you know that a plane had hit the towers?

A. We were in quarters and we were watching on the TV that a plane hit the twin towers. Then we got the run on the fifth alarm. We got on the rig and started responding down there.

The chauffeur went down West Street. On the way down there, en route, we heard on the radio that another plane hit the second tower. At that time we figured to ourselves that we were under attack and that we were going to something that we never went to before.

The chauffeur stopped the rig. We got there in, I'd say, about ten minutes. We stopped the rig I'd say about 100 feet north of the north tower on West Street. We all got off the rig. We grabbed our rollups. I was the control man. I had the control bag. The officer told us take an extra mask, which we were told to do, an extra cylinder, actually.

So we took the extra stuff, and we walked over with the officer to I guess it was the street. There was a command post in the street which was in front of I guess north of the north tower again. I don't know where --

(Interruption.)

A. We stopped the rig before the overbridge. We walked over to the chief who was running the operation at the time. I don't know his name. We checked in. Our officer told us

that we were to go into the north tower and start working our way up.

We entered the building on the West Street side. We entered the north tower. We kept walking in. We walked into the lobby. The elevators were not working, so we started up the stairway the stairway at the time, I don't recall the number. We started working our way up.

We made it up -- every five or six or seven floors we just took a little break because there were a lot of people on the stairway, a lot of people coming down, just to catch our breath and whatever, take a little breather.

We finally made it up to probably around the -- I would say the 18th floor when we took a little break. At the time the building was shaking. It was hit with something. At that time we thought it was another missile attack, so we all just ran into the stairway and just helped cover us and other civilians and firemen until it stopped shaking. We didn't know what it was at the time.

After everything cleared, about might be five minutes, myself and the officer and maybe

a few other ones proceeded to work up to the 20th floor. At that time we were told that the other building --

Q. Did you hear it on the radio?

A. I didn't hear anything on the radio, other than a mayday. My fellow partners said they did. I did not hear it. I was control man. I had a radio.

Q. Some guys heard it; some guys didn't.

A. Right.

We were told that there's been a collapse -- they didn't say what collapsed -- and to start working your way out. My officer, who was great at the time, had a lot of experience and he knew something was up. So he just said, "Let's go. We're going out."

At that time we started to proceed down from the 20th floor. We met the other guys who were with us on 18. We started to work our way down, with the civilians and other firemen, helping each other back and forth.

I did pass some people that I know. Captain Freddie Ill was on I think the 13th floor. We saw him. We asked him what was going

on. He said he'd be right down. They were doing something. They didn't mention what they were doing. Obviously they didn't need a hand, because they didn't ask us for help. They said they'd be right down. I guess his company was on that floor.

So we worked our way down, helping civilians, other firemen. It was a very slow walk. On the way down I guess it was the dust from the south tower -- we thought it was smoke -- started coming up. The lights went out. There were no lights at the time in the stairway. It was dark. We thought it was smoke from whatever it was, but it was actually the dust from the south tower. We still didn't know it collapsed.

I'd say it took us 25 minutes to get out from the floor we were on, which was the 20th.

Q. When you got out, did you go out the same way you came in?

A. Yes. We got into the lobby. Some people were just hanging out, making decisions which way to go, trying to find their way out.

Usually when you go out of a building, in my case we usually find the fire engine. We move out to the fire engine to see what was going on, which was parked at that time where we dropped off, north of the north tower.

We came out of the building. I do remember a firefighter from I think 4 Truck asking one of us for masks because he had to go up to the 42nd floor; to do what, I don't know.

Q. You don't know the guy?

A. I don't know the guy. I don't know his name. One of our guys gave him his mask. It wasn't me. One of our other guys gave him his mask. He said he had to go up there to help rescue, which I think was on the 42nd floor. What they were doing, I don't know. I don't think the guy made it out; I'm not sure.

Then we came out of the building. My officer and two other firefighters were in the lobby for a second. We became separated for maybe a couple of minutes. As we walked out, we were watching out because there were still things dropping out of the north tower. We just ran, scattered a little bit to the front, which is

West Street.

Chief Al Turi was there with a megaphone, Chief Al Turi, who saved an awful lot of people. He was just yelling for everybody to clear away from the building. He was screaming "Just keep moving. Don't stop." I still didn't know the south tower collapsed, because at that time when we came out all the dust and everything was clear. There was a little dust in the area, but it was blue sky. You can't see, actually, the south tower from where you are.

Q. Yeah, right. There's that big --

A. Right, right. You can't see it because it supposedly collapsed downwards. So we couldn't see the south tower had collapsed.

We just kept walking. I'd say we waited by Al Turi for a minute or two. I got in touch with my officer, who was still in the lobby. They came out and they met us. Once they met us, we crossed West Street. Al Turi was still there with the megaphone yelling for everybody to keep clearing away from the building, don't stop, just keep walking, move, move.

I don't know if some guys went south. I'm not sure. I know we went north because that's where our fire engine was and that's where we were going to go. As we started to walk, we just passed the bridge, the first bridge, which was on whatever it was.

Q. On West Street.

A. Yeah, the bridge. We just passed that. We were a bunch of firemen. Somebody just yelled, "It's coming down!" We just looked up, and the tower started to collapse. We looked up, and everybody just scattered all different ways.

I went up West Street. I just kept running up West Street, because that's where I figured I had to be to be away from this. Some guys I guess dove under cars. I know my officer and they went up the street which is right there; I think it was Vesey. Where are we?

Q. Vesey. They probably went that way; right?

A. Where is the south tower?

Q. The south tower is over here.

A. Where's West Street? We came here?

Q. Yeah, here's the north tower.

A. The north tower. So I would say -- there's a street right here next to Merrill Lynch.

Q. Okay.

A. I would say over here. Maybe Vesey Street, right. They must have went up Vesey Street. Because this rig was actually destroyed; right?

Q. Yeah, that was destroyed.

A. So they must have went up Vesey Street. I went straight up West Street.

Q. West Street.

A. I didn't even know what was going to happen, but we got separated. Then the building came down. I just turned around and I just saw this big black thing around me, which I didn't know at the time what it was. I thought this was it. I thought it was a fireball or the building around me. I just said I didn't think I'd make it; there's no way.

Then it hit me with a force, which was incredible. That was actually the dust storm. It just was total darkness, no sound at all, nothing at all. I just stood there for a second.

What am I going to do? I started walking around, walking into walls, walking into cars. You couldn't see nothing.

I finally just walked to an area where I saw an ESU car. I got up to it and I held onto it. I closed the windows in the car. I was going to go inside of it, but I said no, I better not. I held onto it in case something else happened. I didn't know what was going to happen. I was underneath whatever it was.

So I waited there for like whatever -- it felt like forever -- until everything cleared. After everything cleared to a point where I could see, I started to walk back to the area. My company was -- obviously they must have come out and passed me. They must have gone up the West Side Highway to where they were supposed to go. I walked back in, into the area, to see what we could do and if I could help and stuff.

At the time the magnitude didn't hit me. You don't think that there's people trapped. You think that everybody got out. I'm here, so everybody else got out. You don't think of the magnitude of the collapse.

At that time I came back here, and there was a bunch of firefighters over by the rig. Frank Gribbon was there. He was a chauffeur, so I started hooking up lines to help another chauffeur. We were putting out all the car fires that were exploding. I did that for probably around an hour and a half.

I couldn't see nothing. My eyes were shot, cut and stuff. I was just physically gone.

I was doing that for a while back and forth. Right in this area of Vesey Street, there was a whole bunch of car fires. We were putting them out. Then a chief -- who he was, I don't know. He saw the way I looked. I was talking to Ronnie, a guy from 16 Truck, the chauffeur -- 16 Engine, actually.

He asked, "What are you guys doing?" I said, "Well, we're just operating some hose lines." He said, "Were you guys in the collapse?" I said, "Yeah, we were." He said, "You guys are out of here. Just leave the area." He took my name down. He said, "I don't want to see you in here again." He made us leave the area. Why --

Q. They were probably trying to get a head count.

A. Right. He made us leave the area. He took my name and said, "If you were there" -- he made us leave the area.

I walked down to the west side and I met my company. At the time they knew I made it because we had radioed a transmission. I told the officer where I was. I said, "Lou, I'm over here." I knew they were out of the site already. I said, "I'm helping with car fires, doing what I can with whatever I have left."

Like I said, that's basically it. I remember going up -- there were two guys from 24 Engine who rolled up at the time and hooked up with us. They came up by themselves. They had no masks or anything. They hooked up with us. We said, "Where are you going with no masks?" They said, "We're going to go up." I said, "You guys are crazy, going up there with no masks."

They hooked up with us. I guess being with us it saved them, because they didn't go up any farther. They came out with us.

Q. They went up --

A. They went up with us. We said, "Why don't you work with us?" Our officer said, "Why don't you work with us? We'll work together." They worked with us, and they came out with us. I saw them later in the triage area. We were hugging and thank God they were with us.

Other than that -- then I came out of the area and they wouldn't let us back in. We just stayed there until seven or eight hours until they released us.

That's basically off the bat what I remember.

Q. Anything else?

A. No. Guys I've seen -- I know a lot of guys passing us, guys who were running up there. There was a chief who was actually upset at us because we were taking a breather on one of the floors. He was like, "What are you guys doing?" The officer was like we're carrying all this stuff.

Q. Yeah, you've got to go up 80 floors.

A. So where are we going to go? Whether he lived or not, I don't know. He actually ran past us also. Then we saw him a little while

later on one of the floors. He was puking and stuff. So we said, "Chief, why don't you just relax a little bit. Where are you going to go?" He said, "No, I've got to go," and he left again. So whether he made it or not, I don't know.

Q. They may have told him go up there and tell us what you've got. So he was determined to get up there, and you can't run up 80 flights of stairs.

A. No, you can't, you can't. He wasn't in great shape. He was an elderly guy -- not elderly but --

Q. Older than me?

A. There were guys who were running up there just like -- and the civilians were great. They were coming down, giving us water, telling "You guys are great." We helped out a lot of people. They were all bunched up in an area, and we were just saying, "Stay to the wall. Just keep walking. Don't stop. Let us go up. You guys come right down." They were giving us water and Gatorade.

There were some people we saw who were bleeding. Some were burnt. We weren't sure

whether we should help them. They were moving down. The best thing to do is let's keep moving, don't stop. Then on the way down we did the same thing, helped each other, firemen. Some people took our masks for some air, civilians. We did help out that one lady that 6 Truck helped out.

Q. Josephine?

A. I think we helped one floor with her. We just got her one floor, and then they took over. I guess they walked the rest of her. She was heavy, so we just couldn't do much with her.

Other than that, that's basically what I remember.

Q. Okay. That's fine. Thanks a lot for being candid with us. Thank you, Tommy.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's 20 after 12, and that completes the interview.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

File No. 9110474

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

F. F. ROBERT SALVADOR

Interview Date: January 18, 2002

Transcribed by Maureen McCormick

R SALVADOR

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 18, 2002. The time is 1325 hours, and this is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta, the safety battalion, New York City Fire Department.

I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. Firefighter Robert Salvador, Engine 28.

Q. Of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the location -- we are at the quarters of Engine 28, and this interview is regarding the events of September 11.

Go ahead. Tell the story in your own words.

A. The alarm came in. We heard the explosion. My initial thought that the explosion was something out of the kitchen. It was approximately 8:47, 8:48.

We ran out to the front. We were getting on the rig. We knew it was an explosion, and then we heard a 1060, an emergency. A 1060 came over and said a plane just hit the north tower, commuter plane. So we really manned the

R SALVADOR

1
2 rig, and then we finally got the ticket as we
3 were pulling out of the quarters.

4 I proceeded down first the FDR Drive.
5 On the FDR Drive, traffic was backed up all -- as
6 far as we know, as far as I could see. The left
7 lane was open for emergency vehicles, and we were
8 following a couple of police cars, and we made it
9 to the tunnel going to the west, West Street,
10 from the FDR Drive. As we came out of the
11 tunnel, the battery, the tunnel was in front of
12 us. The cops were waving us in, and we proceeded
13 in, and there were numerous parts of bodies and
14 body parts all over the street, and we
15 encountered -- we had seen five or six floors of
16 fire from the north tower, confirmed fire.

17 I proceeded on. I dropped the
18 lieutenant and the five firefighters off in front
19 of the north tower. There were no hydrants in
20 front of the building because they were taken
21 already, and there were numerous amounts of
22 engines and trucks in front of the building
23 already. I turned up Vesey Street and proceeded
24 to, I guess, West Street where Building 7 is. I
25 made a left turn. Right there was a hydrant.

R SALVADOR

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

I proceeded to hook up, and as I was hooking up, the second plane hit the south tower. Debris flew into the streets and I remember ducking behind the rig because of all the debris that was coming, you know, from the south tower.

Then I stretched into the north tower. I started pumping water into the north tower, and by that time, I noticed there was another engine company there. It was Engine 4, and they were supplying the north tower from another standpipe. There was -- they were east of West Street from where I was. I was the only rig on that block that I could see right at that moment.

Numerous amount of people jumping and landing in the street, landing in front of my rig, by my rig. I say I don't know what time. The time frame I don't remember, but I remember a few firemen on the concourse level and a chief with a white helmet and I guess an officer, and there were maybe six or seven firefighters on a concourse level when the south tower was collapsing, and it came down so fast that the

R SALVADOR

1

2 cloud either -- I turned around to start to run.

3

4 Either the cloud engulfed them or they
5 ran towards Church Street, I don't know, but I
6 ran, and the cloud just swept me and picked me up
7 and threw me 20 feet, and I crawled under two
8 parked cars, and I said my prayers.

8

9 After that was over, it was completely
10 darkness. There was no radio transmissions at
11 all. I remember feeling -- I got up, and I was
12 -- made my way to the wall. Something landed on
13 my ankle, and my ankle was hurting. I was
14 feeling my way down the Building 7 towards
15 Barclay Street, I think it is, and I picked up
16 two civilians. I think one was a doctor and one
17 was a D.E.P. agent, because he had a yellow
18 jacket on. I think we both held arm in arm, and
19 we heard someone calling from a building, and we
20 made for the building, and we got out of the
21 street.

21

22 It was total darkness, and you
23 couldn't see a thing. I stayed in that building
24 for about ten minutes. I made my way back out of
25 the building back towards my rig. My rig was
completely full of debris, and the motor was --

R SALVADOR

1
2 the motor was conked out. The motor wasn't on,
3 so I know it was pumping water, so I took it out
4 of pump. I tried to start the motor. It
5 wouldn't kick over. I did it again, and then the
6 north tower started coming down.

7 I heard the same -- same pancaking,
8 like a machine gun coming and glass flying, so I
9 closed -- shut the door, got out of the rig, and
10 ran -- started running across the street. I
11 wanted to run up Church Street, but I couldn't
12 make it to the corner, so everything was on top
13 of me, so I just took my turnout coat and put it
14 over my head and knelt in the corner, and the
15 heat was so tremendous that it took all the
16 oxygen out of the air.

17 I couldn't breathe. It was so hot. I
18 started feeling my way on the side of the wall.
19 I guess it was the post office wall. I made my
20 way to a little more deeper opening, and I
21 remember somebody opening the door for me, and
22 then the oxygen inside the building, and no
23 oxygen outside blew the doors in down the stairs,
24 and we were lost in the loading dock for I don't
25 know how long, because it was totally darkness.

R SALVADOR

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

We found our way on top of the -- on top of the loading dock, and it started to clear a little bit, and in the corner -- we found six people huddled in the corner, so all frantic, and I tried to tell everybody to calm down. We got to get out of here, and we made our way up towards Church Street.

We came up into the center of the post office. As we came out, it was completely darkness out there, and I told everybody that, you know, as soon as we come out of the building, run north. That's left out of the building. I don't know how I figured that was left, but I did, and we got out of the building. Everybody run left.

So as soon as we came out of the building, all the people that were in the building ran left, and I noticed an ambulance. I could just see the silhouette. Me and this white-shirt guy, a Port Authority cop, I guess, jumped in the ambulance. The ambulance took us all the way down to Chambers Street, and I got out, and from there I went and walked up to the next two blocks, and I jumped in an ambulance,

R SALVADOR

1

2 and my leg was swollen. That's all I remember.

3

4 Q. That's pretty accurate. Anything else
you want to say?

5

A. No, that's all.

6

7 Q. Okay, thanks a lot, Bob. I appreciate
your cooperation.

8

9 The time is 1335, and that's the end
of the interview.

10

11 A. I do recall before the towers came
12 down, before the south tower came down, 21 engine
13 pulled up next to me, and they took whatever
14 cylinders and whatever roll-ups, and they took my
search rope and whatever tools I had.

15

16 That was Captain Bill Burke, and then
17 21 engine made a left on Vesey Street going up
18 towards Church. I don't know if he grabbed a
19 hydrant or not, but that's the last I seen of 21
engine, and then I also encountered Jeff
20 Giordano, because he was on foot. He came and
21 took my Scott mask, my spare Scott mask, and
22 that's it.

23

Q. What company is Jeff?

24

A. 3 truck.

25

Q. 3 truck, and he took your Scott?

R SALVADOR

1

2 A. Right.

3 Q. Anything else?

4 A. That's it.

5 CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Okay, this concludes

6 the interview.

7

File No. 9110475

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ROY CHELSEN

Interview Date: January 18, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 18, 2002. The time is 1345 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER CHELSEN: Roy Chelsen.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Roy is firefighter first grade in Engine 28 of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Engine 28. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Roy, would you please tell your story in your own words about what happened that day from when you received the alarm.

A. We were actually sitting in the kitchen, the lieutenant and I, and we actually heard the first explosion. We both looked at each other, and we were like, "Oh, what was that?" It seemed like right after that the alarm came in and we were on our way downtown.

We took the FDR Drive down, and you could actually see the building pretty much the

whole way down. The whole three-quarters of the way up was engulfed in fire. We went down underneath the Battery Tunnel. We came up. It was still like flags falling. It seemed like it was very quiet. I noticed that Bob, the chauffeur, was kind of swerving around. Later on I heard he was going around bodies.

He dropped us off underneath the second bridge.

Q. The north bridge?

A. The north bridge up by the north tower. He dropped us off there. We looked up to make sure nothing was coming down, and we proceeded in. I think the revolving doors were kind of busted up, so I think we went through a window.

We reported to the command desk, the command post there, and we immediately started going up. They just said, "28, start heading up."

Q. Do you know what stairway you went up?

A. We went up stairway B. I believe it was stairway B.

From there on we really didn't hear too much transmission going on that I can remember

hearing. I had the nozzle position. I had no radio. But I don't remember the lieutenant telling me anything. Later on I heard that there were a lot of maydays and a lot of transmissions going on, but we didn't hear any of it.

One of the only transmissions I do remember hearing, because we were sitting on approximately the 20th floor, that there was another plane on its way. At that point we were still not sure that it was a plane that had hit the tower. There was some talk from the civilians coming down that a plane hit. The consensus was that it was a small plane; Never thinking it was a 737, whatever it was, 767, whatever it was.

We made our way up to 29 or 30. We were again resting again. All of a sudden just -- I don't know if the sequence is right, but everything went black, and all the power went out. There was just this rumbling. I felt like it went on forever.

I believe 4 Engine was with us, there was 28, and I believe 8 Truck was with us. We all just huddled into the staircase. We were

holding on thinking -- I'm a big person. I'm thinking the floor's going to collapse or the ceiling's coming down, but I thought that was it.

When the rumbling finally stopped, all of a sudden we felt this gush of air coming from everywhere. Just from every direction there was like wind blowing. What I heard later on, that was just the concussion of the air coming back up from tower two.

From there I believe we heard -- there was a chief that came down with a bullhorn, telling everybody to get out. I think he was from the 11th Battalion. That's what I'm hearing.

Q. He came down the stairs?

A. I think he was up a couple floors ahead of us. I don't know if he was with us the whole time. I know we were paired up with 4 Engine. 5 Engine was with us, but I heard later on that somebody in their company had a heart attack or chest pains.

Q. Yes.

A. They took him down. So I don't know who was with us the whole time. But he did come

down and tell us to evacuate.

From there it was just asses and elbows. We all just started running. I didn't even have my mask on anymore. We just dropped everything. Actually between 20 and 30, 4 Engine and ourselves kind of joined together there. So we dropped everything and started running down on 30.

We got down to 19 or 20, and I know there were some cops down there. We found some civilians down there.

Q. Port Authority cops?

A. Port Authority cops. I saw city cops. They had their masks on, but they had ESU uniforms on.

Q. Right.

A. They were all huddling about. Everybody was still coming down. We were kind of waiting, getting everybody together again. A friend of mine in 8 Truck told me, he said, "Look out the window. Tower two is gone." At that point nobody knew what was going on.

At that point we were coming down stairway C, I think.

Q. You went across?

A. We went across, yeah.

Q. Was stairway B clogged?

A. Stairway C, I heard -- stairway B didn't go all the way up or -- for some reason from 20 over, we switched.

Q. Okay.

A. Then I heard coming down they said stairway C is pretty well wiped out down there, so it doesn't go down. I think that's what I heard, because from there on we went B. From 20 down to 1 we went on stairway B.

Q. Okay.

A. We kind of formed a line for the civilians, and we led them down the stairs because it was pitch-black and it started to get smoky. We led them down, 4 Engine, ourselves and I believe 8 Truck again.

Q. Did the cops come down with you?

A. I don't know. I don't know. At this point it was just like I want to get out. I heard that tower two is gone. I said, let's just get these people and let's get out of here.

We all grouped together again, like I

said, and we started going down. We got down to the lobby. The lobby is like gone. There were probably 20 or 30 guys down in the lobby mulling around.

Q. They weren't trying to get out?

A. They were just -- no, no.

We went to where the command post was. We were standing there. Our officer was like, "Well, let's stay here." I kept saying, "Lou, I'm going to get out. I want to get out of this building." I said, "We can go out where we came in." There was a brick wall outside tower --

Q. The north tower.

A. The north tower. There was a brick wall. I said we can run along the wall and go underneath the bridge there and then shoot up West Street. He said, "Is everybody here?" I said, "Yeah, the company's all right here." With that we -- I think 18 Truck ran out with us, and we just hauled ass.

We got out and we got under the bridge. A couple bodies came down, flying down, just in front of our guys. We just got under the bridge and like, okay, it's safe, it's good. All of a

sudden we heard this huge explosion, and that's when the tower started coming down. We all started running.

We lost everybody there again. I don't know what happened. I saw my cousin. We gave each other a big hug. That's when everything started hitting the fan again. I heard some guys dove behind cars. I just kept running up West Street.

As soon as that thing hit us, I think it knocked -- I'm not sure what knocked me over, but I ended up on the ground. Like Sal said, it was completely black. Now I can't breathe. You start running. I'm out of breath, and I didn't have my mask. It was on the 30th floor. I just started choking. I couldn't breathe because I'm sucking all that shit in. Somehow I happened to see a fireman walking to my right. He had a mask, and I grabbed it. He helped me with it until we walked out.

Then two guys from an ambulance grabbed me. They started giving me water. They had me hooked up to an IV. But then everybody started running again, something about a major gas leak.

Q. That's what I heard. A chief said they thought there was a major gas leak.

A. I said get this thing out of me. I'm running again. I can't sit here. So they took it out. I'm running with my hand on my arm, and I'm running north again. We finally met up with the rest of the crew on West Street.

I've just got to say, on our way down we saw 9 Engine with that woman.

Q. Right.

A. We saw her.

Q. 6 Truck.

A. 6 Truck, I'm sorry. We saw 6 Truck. We also saw 18 Truck. I think they were on their way up to. We said to them, "They told everybody out of the building," and then they came with us.

Q. That's it?

A. Yeah.

Q. Wow, that's pretty good. Well, thank you, Roy.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The time is 1455, and that's the end of this interview.

File No. 9110476

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREMAN KEVIN CRONICK

Interview Date: January 18, 2002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

K. CRONICK

BATTALION CHIEF CONGUISTA: Today is January 18, 2002. The time is 1115 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Conguista of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. Fireman first grade Kevin Cronick.

Q. Fireman Cronick is assigned to Engine 3 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Engine 3. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001. Okay Kevin, could you please tell us what happened that day in your own words.

A. I arrived at West Street with the rest of the company, Engine 3, and we disembarked from our apparatus. We proceeded to locate over toward the command post, where I believe it was Chief Ganci was the Deputy Chief in charge. Then we were just assembling there for further orders. We just sort of hung around there while things developed and the Chief was just waiting to assign us a duty, you know, somewhere, which he hadn't made any decisions at that point.

K. CRONICK

As other companies arrived, it started getting a little crowded by the command post, so Lieutenant Walsh made us move to the adjoining building, the building adjoining the command post. We were standing fast in front of that building. I remember seeing Captain Brethel had approached us just to give us some words of encouragement and told us to make sure we all stay together and that we didn't get separated at that stage. Then he left us and walked back towards West Street and that was the last time I had seen Captain Brethel.

Then shortly thereafter is when I heard this loud rumbling noise and we looked up and saw that the building, or the south tower of the Trade Center was collapsing. Then we just turned around and took refuge inside the building we were standing in front of. The building collapsed. Then after it collapsed, once we felt that it was safe to come back outside again, we came back out to the front of the building and we recovered our equipment, whatever we could find, went looking for our officer and any Chiefs in charge and we all made -- we all moved around to Vesey Street. It seemed to be the focal point where everyone was gathering.

K. CRONICK

Then from that point, we had moved further down Vesey Street toward the river, because there was a fear of the gas mains possibly exploding, which was the way I understood it. That was it. We got down to the river. We pretty much just kind of gathered our thoughts and tried to get everything, all the companies together to find out who was missing and who was still with us.

Q. Where were you when the second tower collapsed?

A. When the second tower collapsed, we were just down by the river I think.

Q. Did the dust cloud get that far?

A. Not really, no. It never reached that point. That was pretty much where we remained until we moved back into the area.

Q. After the second collapse?

A. That's correct. After the second collapse.

Q. Anything else you want to say?

A. After we left the river, we went back toward Vesey Street and we all stayed on Vesey Street pretty much for a good part of the day and then they wanted to get an idea of who was missing and who was still there. They proceeded to have all the companies join

K. CRONICK

up and have a roll call to see who was missing and who was still out (inaudible). That was pretty much all I can remember at this point.

BATTALION CHIEF CONQUISTA: All right. The time is 11:30. That concludes this interview.
Thank you.

File No. 9110477

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER JASON MCGIMPSEY

Interview Date: January 18, 2,002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

J. MCGIMPSEY

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The date is January 18, 2,002. The time is 1045 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Q. Please state your name.

A. Jason McGimpsey.

Q. Jason is a 6th grade Firefighter assigned to Ladder 12 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Ladder 12. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001.

Jason, in your own words please tell us what happened that day from when you got the run to the fire.

A. We got the run. We went over there with one extra guy, who ended up on the rig there. We went over. I don't know exactly where we parked when we got there. Got out, and they didn't have an extra mask for me, so I had to go find a mask. I kind of got a mask together as we were going in.

Q. Where did you first report?

A. We first reported to -- we went into the building and we thought we were in the south tower

J. MCGIMPSEY

because there was a Chief there that wanted all the officers to report to him. He said he designated the building as the south tower, so I thought it was the south tower at the time. Our Lieutenant went over there and got our assignment to go to -- start at the 14th floor and work our way up and make sure everybody was clear.

So we got up to the 14th floor, started to work our way up and we just got to the 19th floor when the first building collapsed. We were --

Q. You were in the Marriott?

A. In the Marriott, yes. At that point, we were trying to get -- it was kind of chaotic, the lights went out after the first collapse. I was trying to get all my gear together and somebody yelled out just forget everything, just go down, just get the hell out of here. Go, go. So everybody just kind of high tailed downstairs trying to get everybody together.

Q. Were you with any other units or you were just Ladder 12?

A. There were other people that were with us, but I didn't know who they were or how they ended up there or anything like that. We got down to about the fifth floor. We couldn't get down any further. There

J. MCGIMPSEY

was debris there. So we were trying to figure out how to get out of there. We took like a corner room and there was another company that was with us, but I don't remember which company it was. We were trying to figure out how to get out of there.

We were going to have to single sign out the window, but the rope was on the 19th floor. We were thinking about using a hose line and we decided that wasn't such a good idea, so they said that somebody has got to go up and get the rope.

Initially I was going to get it because I brought the rope. So another guy, I was the junior man, so they wouldn't let me do that. Another guy stepped up and said he was going to get it. I was going to go with him and the officer said to stay here. We are going to go up and get it. The two went up to get the rope. As they were going up --

Q. Who is this, Lieutenant Petti?

A. Lieutenant Petti and Angel Juarbe. They went to get the rope and we stayed trying to figure out what we were doing. Tried to get in touch with the command post. We forgot before we went in there, they switched us to channel 3 and just because of everything going on, nobody thought to go back to Channel 1. We were

J. MCGIMPSEY

trying to get the command post. There was no answer. We were trying to get anybody to realize. There was no answer.

They had a Mayday come in for a guy from 4 Truck, Brennan, from 4 Truck. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q. Were you aware that the south tower had collapsed?

A. We didn't know actually what was going on. We weren't sure if those noises were -- sounded like another plane, bomb, something like that, but -- it just was a big, we didn't really know what was going on because we were inside the building and then walking around we knew it was bad, just from looking out. We could see just from out the windows and everything. But as they went up we found a way out through the debris down to the next floor down, so we were -- everybody started to go down.

As they were going down, one of the guys wanted to wait for them. He actually -- before we started down, the other guys radioed back. They got the rope, I believe, I think they got the rope, but they were going to go after the guy with the Mayday.

J. MCGIMPSEY

Everybody was going down to the fourth floor. One of the other guys, Mike Mullan, was going to go up and see to help them out.

Q. Did the guy who gave the Mayday, did he say where he was?

A. I can't remember if he did or not. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Mayday

Mayday Mayday. Nobody was answering. So that's just the way --

Q. I was just curious.

A. They went to try and find him. As Mike was going back up, I wanted to go with Mike and one of the senior guys, he told me to stay next to him the whole time. I went up to him, I said look, maybe I should go with Mike. He said no, just stay with me and he went down and I guess it happened, the first collapse. I didn't see there was a couple of civilians that they found. So they went down and I just didn't want to leave Mike, I went to go with Mike.

So I told Mike I was going to go with him and Mike ordered me to go downstairs and just from that time, from the top of the stairs to the bottom I got to

J. MCGIMPSEY

the fourth floor and the second building had collapsed. Everything above our floor was lost in the cloud. Those three guys, they were lost in the cloud too.

From that point everything just turned black. I thought we were buried at first, so I masked up at first, because I don't know if it would be -- it was just everything just turned black so I thought I was buried. The second collapse was really bad because the whole building really shook and the noise -- it was -- it sounded like it was another plane. I was waiting for the fuselage to come in. It was so loud.

So after that, smoke -- the black started lifting and the light started coming through. The collapse had ripped apart the back wall of the stairwell we were on. So we were kind of like on a ledge of debris looking out once everything cleared up. We were trying to figure out how to get out. That's when I saw those three civilians were with us.

We were on the ledge. We were trying to figure out how to get out. There was a beam that was leaning against an I beam that was leaning against the building. So I yelled out to everybody that we got an I beam here. Not everybody heard me. So the guys that

J. MCGIMPSEY

heard me went over to the I beam and we brought one civilian down. We went down the I beam. It was really weird because at the bottom, there was nobody around and then once you started walking, you kind of ended up like there was nobody. So we just kind of walked out.

We all kind of got separated in the debris. I went out with three guys and down the I beam and we ended up meeting up on the west side by the water.

Q. What happened to the other two civilians?

A. The other two -- it got confusing, really, after the second collapse, it really got confusing. I know we brought the one down and the other ones must have been -- the other ones stayed with the other guys and it just got -- there was so much going on. The other guys didn't even come with us. They might have taken a different way to get down. I know one of the guys actually -- we weren't even sure of accountability, where everybody was. And I know afterwards everybody thought that I was still with Mike, so it was kind of confusing after that.

We came back. We were on the west side there. We had a little Fire Department boat pick us up, a two man boat. They brought us over to the Jersey side. I kind of got my bearings over there, made a

J. MCGIMPSEY

couple of calls, see if everybody was okay. Then once I got my bearings together, I hopped on a boat and came back.

Went back to the Manhattan side. The other two guys kind of just hung out back on the Jersey side. When I got back there I was trying to find -- I had been calling in, trying to find -- I was calling the Lieutenant and all the guys I wasn't sure about, trying to get in touch with them. Couldn't get touch in touch with them. I was looking for anybody in the company, trying to find anyone with the company, trying to find out what happened with the guys.

The company told us they thought because the senior guy that had me the whole time, after the second collapse, he didn't hear me yell to everybody for the I beam. I guess he went down -- at the time -- I didn't know everybody -- I thought everybody heard. He thought that I was upstairs with Mike still. So I tried to find him. Now I found him, just kind of got everybody together. Everybody figured out where everybody was at. We had accountability now. Told them the guys that were on the Jersey side. Then I ended up trying to stay. I stayed with the company for a while but my eyes got really bad after that.

J. MCGIMPSEY

I kept flushing them and I tried to stay as long as I could, but they put me in the hospital. That was it.

Q. Anything else you want to add?

A. That's all I can think of right now.

BATTALION CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Thank you very much. I appreciate your help. I'm trying to put this thing together. It's 11 o'clock. That's the end of this interview.

File No. 9110488

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER TIMOTHY BURKE

Interview Date: January 22, 2,002

Transcribed by Elisabeth F. Nason

T. BURKE

BATTALION CHIEF McGRATH: Today is Tuesday, January 22, 2,002. The time is 1611 hours. This is Battalion Chief James McGrath of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Timothy Burke of Engine 202. This interview is regarding the events of September 11, 2001 and is taking place in the quarters of Engine 202 in Brooklyn.

Q. Timmy, please state your name and just recount what happened on September 11 to the best of your recollection.

A. My name is Timothy James Burke from Engine 202. I was working September 11. I got in at 8 o'clock in the morning. The first plane had hit a little later. We watched it from the roof of the building. Then they called us to a staging area around quarter to nine, I think, which would be the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. From the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel staging area, we watched the second plane come in.

As soon as the second plane came in, they sent us into the tunnel. We spent a few minutes in the tunnel. Seemed like a lot of traffic in the tunnel. It was rumored that they were blowing up the tunnel then. We got through, we drove over what felt like

T. BURKE

gravel, because there was so much glass and debris around. I saw a plane tire in an alley, body parts and people all over the place. We pulled up, as soon as we got up in front of the building, I think we were right in front of the Vista Hotel, they made a statement that we should keep moving forward, so our rigs -- we got back on the rigs, then we moved to position right in front of, looks like the Merrill Lynch building, which is 2 World Financial Center.

From there we proceeded to, that would be the staging area, which is the two garage tunnels. Their staging area was right at the throat of the garage tunnels. Our officer stayed with the command post and the engine and truck went into one of the garages where all the firefighters were starting to meet up.

As soon as that happened, the Chief ran over, started screaming that the engine should be on one side, the truck should be on another. That's the last I saw of 101. That's the last we saw from 101. Then they were split from us. There was just all engines on that side. A guy from 211 had a cell phone and we were all trying to call our families. At this point, this was a few minutes into the box, few minutes into us being there, I would say about 5, 10 minutes.

T. BURKE

It seemed pretty bad that everybody was willing to get on the phone and try to call their wives to say good-bye or say whatever. Just the faces of people, you kind of knew that some of us were going to get hurt, because it was just too too too much going on. I had a radio and I was the nozzle man. I had a radio. There was a calling for water, they had no water, they had no water, I thought it was coming from Engine 10. I'm not sure. Then there was a call out that one engine was on the 19 floor, and that if they expect them to get to 34, it's going to be at least an hour. I forget the number of that engine.

There was a lot of chatter. There was chatter that a fireman was hit by a jumper, to keep your heads up, to keep an eye out on what was going on. We learned that was Danny Suhr. At one point, at the beginning of us getting there, at one point, we got off the rig. We got all our gear and we needed something else off the rig, so Bobby Norris and I ran to the rig and I looked at him and I wasn't going to go unless he went and he wasn't going to go unless I went, because it looked a little hairy, not that we wouldn't go. It was just we wanted to stay with each other, make sure everything was okay with each other because

T. BURKE

there was a lot of stuff coming down.

That's when I saw the guy from Rescue 1, Anginelli, the older guy, and I wasn't sure what he wanted. He looked a little old and I was wondering what he was doing. He wanted an extra Scott pack if we had one on our rig. We searched the rig for a Scott pack. Then I found out that he is not with us anymore. I remembered just speaking to him.

Then we faded back to the garage and they started sending companies in. It was like they weren't grabbing officers at this point and saying get your company together. They were just grabbing full sets of men. We weren't a full set of men, we were just me and Bobby standing at the line. Our chauffeur was sitting with our detail from 20, Pete. His wife was in the building.

When the plane hit, he called his wife to say, when the plane hit tower one, he called his wife to say get out of tower two. When we got to the box, he was sitting on the side just worrying about his wife. He was ready to go but he wasn't sitting with us. So when they started taking companies without officers, they started grabbing full groups of guys. They were just grabbing guys on either side of us.

Then there were still a bunch of guys there. Still guys in the streets, still everything going on. Another Chief came over and said you are going to be there for a while, start loosening up, because there was already radio contact that guys were falling in the stairs with heart attacks and stuff. Things like that. Guys were going down, guys weren't making the stairs.

Q. Do you know any specifics, any companies?

A. No, it was just -- I don't know if it was radio or rumor, but when the Chief came over, he said everybody, you are going to be here a while. Loosen up, loosen up.

Q. Do you know who the Chief was?

A. No, I don't remember. I remember one guy there was Metcalf. He was -- I remember him from proby school. He was a Lieutenant in proby school, [REDACTED]

[illegible]

T. BURKE

[REDACTED]

The other Chief ran over and he seemed like a Chief for a little while, he seemed liked a little older. He says everybody calm down, you are going to be here a while. Take your gear off, stay cool, you don't want to heat up now. Some of the guys started taking their masks off, the jackets off. I remember we made a nice pile of stuff. I remember where our pile was. Then we were sitting there and waiting to get called in, then the radios are going, calling for water, calling for this, calling for that, you know, different things going on on the radio that right now it's hard for me to remember exactly all the chatter. But it was very -- seemed chaotic but not out of control, you know.

When we were standing there and like I said, people -- you just saw people moving, all people moving and if you looked at tower one you saw jumpers. You could hear the sound of jumpers. When you looked at tower two, you saw more flames. So I'm standing in the street, you could look for jumpers to your left and flames to your right, because tower two was more involved.

At that point I was going, where the hell are

T. BURKE

the choppers? That's my mentality, going where the hell are the jets, where the hell are the choppers. I am thinking there was going to be another plane and every time we heard noise people thought it was another plane coming in and so everyone would like flinch.

Then the building popped, lower than the fire, which I learned was I guess, the aviation fuel fell into the pit, and whatever floor it fell on heated up really bad and that's why it popped at that floor. That's the rumor I heard. But it seemed like I was going oh, my god, there is a secondary device because the way the building popped I thought it was an explosion.

When that happened, they all started fading into the garage, masses of people. I'm thinking this building is coming down. We are going to be covered by two buildings. I didn't know if it was a good idea to run for the garage at that time. I was really saying I'm going to be killed by two buildings, they are not going to find me until they uncover one building. So with the amount of people rushing me, we ran through the garage. We kept running through. The only thing we could think about was trying to get as far into the building as possible, which was weird. I just wanted

T. BURKE

to get deeper and deeper, further and further away, which was my mentality.

The guys were following us, me and Joe. We all ran up till we got to like a -- what looked like a workman's shanty, because it was plywood locked up door. Just a temporary door. Usually construction workers keep their tools in there. It's something I know because I used to work in the construction field. It would be like a tool lock or something, just something temporary made. I remember trying to break into there, just to get that much further in.

All of a sudden the noises stopped, the sound of the building falling stopped. We all turned around and it was dark now. We really couldn't see. We got back to where -- we went back to the garage as far in it as we were, we were all full of the cloud. The cloud was in there. All eating the cloud, whatever it was like, very thick. I keep saying it was like a 3 dimensional object. It wasn't smoke. It was like everything. It was like a sand storm. We only had bunker pants on at this time.

I was with Bobby. I don't know what happened to anybody else, but it was very silent after the building fell. Then all the Maydays started happening,

T. BURKE

the guys were screaming. You only tune into certain numbers. Like I heard 131 looking for their irons man. I just kept hearing that back and forth. Bobby Norris and I stayed together the whole time. We were like -- if I was going anywhere, it was with him and he was doing the same thing. I kept on saying to myself, where is 101, because that's my company. So where's 101?

I kept not hearing them and I knew it was a different group of guys that kept on saying they screwed up, something happened, they screwed up. Either they are all together or they are all screwed up. I kept hearing 131 looking for the irons man, the irons man answering back.

I think I heard Sean Albert from 279 call for his guys. I know I heard Sean call for his company. I think it was 279. I don't know. I don't remember exactly. I just remember 131, because 131 (inaudible), come on, speak. We didn't hear anything. I made a choice with Bobby to go get our gear. We felt that if we were going to be here for a long while, I want my helmet, my jacket, if I can get my cylinder. I actually had a size up of the garage because when we first got there we looked around the garage. So I knew

T. BURKE

exactly how far it was from this one stairwell and when we found the stairwell I knew our gear was 15, 20 feet up and that would be 10 feet from the entry of the garage.

So I went for it. I went for my gear, Bobby came with me. We grabbed our gear, we grabbed each cylinder -- Scott packs and I grabbed an extra Scott pack. We both, we both started falling back. Somebody had ran a search group to a back stairwell, which was a pretty good idea. From the stairwell I knew, it would have put us right into the atrium. So we didn't know if that was a good idea to go in there, the atrium being that cafeteria in between the buildings. It's not really a cafeteria. It's like a table area where you can sit down and have coffee, whatever. Part of a mall you would say, because the bottom level was a mall.

The stairwell I knew would lead us right into that area. So we didn't think that was a good idea to take, plus we didn't have our officer, the chauffeur or the back up man and it was just me and the control man together. Then Lieutenant Calkins was looking for us. We were calling back to him. I think he was already outside on the -- outside where the Moran's bar side

T. BURKE

is. I was right there, which is the Pier. Everything is whatchamacallit, landmarks, Moran's bar was the landmark. He was already out there, but Bobby and I were still inside. We actually thought of going back out the way we came in, but there was no visibility and when we got up for our gear, the aluminum facade was laying across the stuff. I thought it was duct work, because we had no visibility, and it felt like duct work. I'm going holy geez, the building came apart that much. There is pieces of duct work all over the place.

If there was visibility, we probably would have went out, knowing that we had an exit out the front, but there wasn't visibility, so we faded back again. That's when we got in touch with Calkins, and Calkins was calling back and forth to us. We finally hooked up. We went outside.

Q. Where did you meet the Lieutenant, in the garage?

A. In the garage, by the search rope. What Bobby and I did was one of us stayed by the search rope. The other guy would go out 10 feet and come back and we would work our way down, looking for things, looking if we could go any further from where we were.

T. BURKE

This way we had an idea what was going on. We worked the search rope down to where I knew of a stairwell, because at least if we had to bail out I knew of one. We stayed at that point. That's where Calkins followed us, followed the search rope. We kept on saying we were on the rope, we were on the rope. He followed the rope down and found us. We proceeded outside.

When we had gotten out we were on the Pier side and that's another reason why it saved us, because we were isolated from the other building. We were here. We came out back here and we were here. The Winter Garden would be the atrium. So somewhere around here I had found a stairwell, but we didn't take that one. We took a stairwell that was over here. We popped out over here. There were just guys falling. I remember running. When the building first started coming down, I remember running and following guys from 204, because Ziegler had a cut on his hand, and I kept on telling him I was following his blood trail. So we made a little joke out of it, because he was doing pretty good.

That's before we lost all visibility. Then I don't know what happened to them. I knew 204 was in there with us, but I didn't know where 224 was. I

T. BURKE

didn't know where anybody else was. I just remember Ziegler from 204 before we lost all visibility. We popped out over here, we all got together. There was 5 of us, the whole Engine Company, and 3 complete sets of bunker gear, because we had no tools, we had no anything. Just 3 cylinders and three complete sets of bunker gear, because everybody went -- like I said the Chief told us break down and take your stuff off, and then the buildings came down and nobody had really a chance to recover their gear.

Then one guy was screaming, let's all get together, let's all get together. The Lieutenant says the first building fell, the second building will. Let's keep moving. We left. We started walking on the Pier. When we got around Moran's bar over to where the floating hospital is --

Q. Stop for one second, okay.

A. Back on?

Q. Yes.

A. We got out of the building and --

Q. You were heading north?

A. We were heading north under the Lieutenant's instructions that the first building came down, the second one will. Let's keep moving. So we moved

T. BURKE

around and we got to -- they had that ferry, that floating barge. We got there. The other building started coming down. We ran and at this point there was a good hundred firemen running, guys were tripping, we were worried about getting covered with debris. We actually got covered with the cloud again over on the Pier side up there.

We ended up getting separated a little bit again, but it wasn't bad because we were outside. When we got up to there, and I guess it's called River Terrace by this map. We were going up there, like I said the second building had fallen. Now we were cut off from the first building by being on the Pier side. So we had to walk around to get to around there, we had -- I think at this point is when we knew everything was all haywire.

Q. Did you hear any radio transmissions at that point that you recall?

A. Not that I recall. It was just hectic. Really was. We went up to the corner -- somewhere over here and there was two ferries. There was a couple of hurt firemen, we helped them on the ferry. I remember that. We were standing there and it was like I don't know exactly what time it was, but I knew it was the

T. BURKE

morning and then we looked at the officer and we asked if we can go try and get some water or something for us and for whoever needed it.

We went into Stuyvesant High School, Bobby and I, and we commandeered a dolly. We filled it with sandwiches and juices and we started handing them out to whoever needed it. We just started helping people on the Pier side. We started helping firemen and civilians, on to the ferry boats. They kept going back and then all of a sudden when we got that dolly filled with all the stuff, we got back to the Pier side and the ferry came in with water. We threw water on the dolly, we wheeled that dolly for about a half an hour around the Pier and wherever we were going. We ended up at West Street, I would say probably around Murray. That's the corner where Stuyvesant High School is, if that's the street. I'm not really sure if it was -- I think we were further down than Vesey. I think we were at Murray.

We ended up over there and then all the second wave of firemen came in and you could see the difference between the first wave firemen and the second wave firemen, because the first wave firemen had the look in their eyes like oh, my god, you don't even

T. BURKE

know what happened.

At that point we were just I think, everybody, the emotions were fried. Just wondering -- like, you wanted to do things, but we couldn't do anything. We got down there. At one point in the day we walked down there, we just got beat up with that sand storm again and we faded back. The rest of the day we were unloading trucks. We were just doing whatever little things we could do, but they were waiting for 7 World Trade Center to fall. I didn't call my wife until 4:00 o'clock that afternoon to tell her I was okay.

Then the Lieutenant called his wife because we couldn't get in touch with anybody or anything. We didn't know what the hell was going on. It was just people all over the place. Firemen kept showing up and they said anybody on the recall that wasn't there before the building fell, they looked like they were just going to work. All the guys who were there before the building fell had this gaze in their eyes, like holy shit.

Q. Was there any radio transmissions or anybody you might have run into that you might be able to add that might help us?

T. BURKE

A. I don't know right now. Not really. Like I said, I seen Angelini looking for a mask.

Q. Did he get one, did you find one?

A. I didn't have one on my rig. I saw a couple of things in the water. They had no pressure. They had no water. I heard 131.

Q. You mentioned earlier that Engine 10 was yelling they didn't have any water. Do have any idea what their location was?

A. No, no. I think it was Engine 10 looking for water there. They had no pressure. There was people with no pressure fighting the fire. That's from what I remember.

Q. Do you know if they were in the towers or they were fighting fires in the street?

A. I'm not even sure. It was at the beginning of everything. It was basically I just remember hearing it. I just remember, holy geez, there is no water anywhere, because I heard everything was wiped out. They just kept asking people to hook up to the building from what I remember. They were trying to augment from as many places as they can.

Q. All right. Is there anything else that you can think of that you might want to add at this time

T. BURKE

before we complete the interview?

A. I think I gave you a quick version.

BATTALION CHIEF McGRATH: You gave me an excellent version. All right. The time is 1636 hours. I want to thank you very much and this will conclude the interview then. Thank you.

File No. 9110489

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER ANGEL RIVERA

Interview Date: January 22, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 22nd, 2002. The time is 1130 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER RIVERA: My name is Firefighter Angel Rivera.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Firefighter Angel Rivera is assigned to Ladder 12 of the New York City Fire Department. We are in the quarters of Ladder 12. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Angel, in your own words tell us what happened.

A. Okay. That Tuesday morning I came to work at 9:00 the 9 by 6 tour. So I was changing clothes and getting ready for work. There was excitement going in the firehouse: It's a bomb, it's a bomb, the World Trade Center is on fire. I never saw the plane hit, the first one, but I was watching the news and we were practically

glued to the TV set. There were rumors it was a bomb. Some of the people said it was a plane. Some people saw the plane. We actually didn't know what happened the first time.

We were here, just waiting to be called to go. The battalion chief was called first with Engine 3. They responded first. We were left behind. As the second plane hit the second tower, we were called. It was a fifth alarm on first call. We responded to the second fifth alarm going on.

Going down Seventh Avenue, everybody's looking. You can see the towers. It was terrifying what we were seeing from the rig: both towers, the black smoke pouring out. We got there. I think we came on Liberty Street and Water Street. That's where we parked the rig.

We got off the rig. We could see people jumping out. We could see body parts all over the place. We were told go to the second tower, report to the lobby. We went and we reported to the command post. I don't remember who the chief was.

Q. This was in the second tower?

A. The second tower, the second tower hit, yes. We reported over there. We were there about ten minutes before the chief told us go to the Marriott Hotel, go from the 14th floor up, search and evacuate all the floors.

So we walk all the way up, no problem. Then we hear the explosion and debris falling. We were looking out of the windows and see body parts all over the place. It was scary. It was very sad.

We searched 14, 15, went in one lobby, we came out the other way, we went in one stairway, came up -- when we hit the 19th floor, something horrendous happened. It was like a bomb went off. We thought we were dead.

The whole building shook. The brick coming out of -- the door to the hallway into the hotel blew off like somebody had thrown it all over the place. It shook all over the place. We were thrown on the floor.

We looked inside the lobby after everything calmed down, and everything was collapsed. The building was still shaking and we're still hearing explosions going on

everywhere, so we decided let's get out of here.

After we decided to get out of there, we dropped everything. We had a roof rope; we dropped it. We didn't think about retaining our tools. We just wanted to get out of there. We ran all the way down to the fourth floor where we ran out of stairs. There were no more stairs.

On the fourth floor we were all safe. Everyone was there, including a couple of guys from other companies.

Q. Do you know what companies they were from?

A. I think 38 Engine or something like that. I can't recall.

We met on that floor, and we were all safe. We were all like -- we could have been over here. What happened, we looked out of the window of the hotel, the wall, practically, because the window was all blown up. There was no way out. The only way out was the roof rope.

So Lieutenant Petti, who was in charge that day, and Firefighter Angel Juarbe decided to go retrieve the rope. Angel said, "I'll go get it." Lieutenant Petti said, "All right. I'll go

with you." So they went.

I gave them a call like five minutes later.

Q. Mention what channel you were on.

A. We were on Channel 3. It was very hard to communicate to the command post. We had no idea what was happening. We had no idea that everything was gone. We were on Channel 3 and calling. I said, "12 Engine, 12, where are you?" "We're there. We're on the way down."

On the way down they heard a mayday, "Mayday, mayday. This is Firefighter Brennan from 4 Truck. I'm trapped. I'm in the Marriott Hotel. I'm on the upper floor." Lieutenant Petti said, "Turn your pass alarm on so we can find you." He said, "I'm in pain. I cannot move. I'm losing consciousness. Please hurry." This is the last time I heard Lieutenant Petti say, "Keep talking. Keep talking. We're going to find you."

When we came down to the fourth floor, we encountered two civilians there, one older fellow and one younger fellow. Mike Mullan, which is another of our guys who lost his life,

was with us.

When Lieutenant Petti and Angel Juarbe tried to find this fellow from 4 Truck, Mullan decided to go -- he was with me on the fourth floor. We were safe. Mullan said, "I'm going to go up and give them a hand." The proby, a brand-new guy, wanted to go, and he asked me, "Should I go?" I said, "No. Just stay with me." The proby stayed with me.

Mike Mullan walked one flight up, and then the most horrendous thing happened. That's when hell came down. It was like a huge, enormous explosion. I still can hear it. Everything shook. Everything went black. The wind rushed, very slowly [sound], all the dust, all the -- and everything went dark.

We were rolling all over the floor, banging against the walls. We separated from each other. I thought I was alone. I thought I was buried alive. After a while -- we waited and waited and waited, and when the smoke and the dust started to give way, we could see a little light from where the stairway went. So we said, shit, this is the light of heaven or something or

this is the light to get out.

The older guy was beside me. I touched him in the dark. I knew there was somebody there. Shit, if we're going to die here, make it fast. When the smoke cleared up, we saw the light very, very slowly just getting clear. Jesus Christ. We were exhausted. We were depleted.

Q. Are you still in the stairway or did you get out into the lobby?

A. No, the guys that were in the stairwell -- I was in the lobby. The guys in the stairway just fell down. That was Heinz Kothe and two other guys. They fell down the stairs. They were trapped somewhere down below, and they managed to get out, dig themselves out.

Q. What company were they in?

A. 12 Truck.

Q. 12 Truck?

A. Yeah. Those were the other guys, who were all there in the lobby.

When that happened, these guys were trying to get down, trying to find their way to try to make a hole through the rubble to follow

the stairway, where the stairway was, to get to safety. That's when the second tower came down.

When the second tower came down, we had no idea what was going on. We thought another plane, another bomb, another as a second device. We thought, this is it, we are dead.

When that happened, as I told you before, everything was black. It was like being inside a storm or volcano or something, something horrendous. We said we're going to die, we're going to die, God help us. I thought that was it, after that it was no more, no more talking. That was it. We were all quiet and said where are we, what happened.

The smoke cleared up, the ashes or the cement or whatever. There was a little opening. All the rubble had fallen and had formed like a ledge. First we walked out and we could see all the buildings building materials, all the beams, everything. I said, "Jesus Christ."

We tried to walk through that rubble. It's very, very dangerous. I had an older guy with me. The older guy said, "What am I going to do?" I said, "Stay with me. I'm going to get

you out of here." He said, "But I'm an older man. I've just had heart surgery." Actually he said to me, "I don't think I can make it." I said, "Well, you're going to try, and we're going to make it." Actually he was very cooperative.

We walked out onto the rubble. We're thinking it can collapse also and we're going to be dead if we stand here too long. So finally we found out where there was a beam. Maybe God put it there. It was an enormous beam about 20 feet away from us that was against the building but to the level where we were, like it started where we were, all the way to the ground.

One of the guys said, "This is our way out." So we all went that way. But the other guys were eager to get out. You don't blame them. They all went that way. I have an older guy with me. What am I going to do now?

What happened, I told him, "Okay, do you see what they do? You're going to do that." He said, "No, I can't." "Yes, you can." He said, "Okay." I grabbed him by the collar here. I put him on the beam. I said, "Just make sure you keep your balance. Just slowly slide down

all the way down. I'll be right with you." So that's how we got out to the bottom.

When we got out to the bottom, there was a lot of debris, a lot of water, a lot of poles, more beams that we have to walk through to get to safety. We got out. There was nobody around. There was a mist.

Finally somewhere in the distance we could see some like people walking, and there were some firefighters that were walking around. The old man, I took him all the way out and I handed him to a cop, to a policeman, which took him out to whatever, to safety, and he was transported to New Jersey or whatever.

This man is keeping in touch with me. He found me through the Men'S Journal. One of the guys here was interviewed, and he gave all the accounts. He mentioned my name, that I was the last one out, carrying this older guy. This older guy, which lives in Florida, found the article. He called the firehouse. Ever since we've been best friends. He said, "Thank you for saving my life. What a coincidence to be saved by a firefighter named Angel."

That's what I can tell you, Chief.

Q. Anything else you want to say, anything at all?

A. That's it.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Thank you for your cooperation, Angel.

FIREFIGHTER RIVERA: Oh, you're quite welcome, Chief.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: It's now 11:45, and that's the end of this interview. Thank you

File No. 9110490

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CRAIG DUNNE

Interview Date: January 22, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 22nd, 2002. The time is 1225 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER DUNNE: Craig Dunne.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Craig Dunne is a Firefighter six grade, assigned to Engine 1 of the New York City Fire Department. We're at the quarters of Engine 1. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. In your own words, Craig, please tell us what happened that day.

A. We got the ticket about 9 a.m. We were over at the Garden on an EMS run. We heard the box come in. We heard the first couple units down there on the scene. They were screaming that a plane went into a building and had numerous fire showing on numerous floors, numerous exposures.

We took up from that run and came back

to the firehouse. We got the ticket around 9:00. We knew pretty much that we were going to be heading down there. So we got our stuff down. We were pretty much on the rig. We just pulled up to the quarters when we got the ticket.

We headed down and we took the West Side Highway. I had the door position that day, so my back was facing the chauffeur. So I really didn't get to see much on the way going down to the towers.

We got there and parked the rig in front of the customs building just by the first pedestrian walk just north of tower one.

Q. On West Street?

A. On West Street, yeah. We were on the eastbound lane of West Street, eastbound side. There were a couple of parked cars. Lieutenant Desperito was with us. He told us grab an extra rollup, extra bottles and take our regular rollup and an extra rollup. He just said stay together.

We proceeded to go into the lobby of tower one. We got in there. The glass was down in the front. There was a gentleman -- you saw people that were jumping from the building. You

had to look up and make sure you didn't get hit by any jumpers or anything. We saw a couple of people that were burnt on the outside of the building. There was a gentleman that was burnt inside when we went in.

We went over and got into the lobby and went over to where the fire command center was, the board. The fire command board was on the wall. There were a couple of gentlemen behind there. There were a few chiefs in there. I don't remember who exactly was in there.

When we got to the command post, whoever was the incident command that day, they teamed us up with 15 Engine and they told us to head towards the 70th floor.

Engine 1 and 15, we started proceeding up the B stairwell, passing other people coming down; no firemen, just a lot of people. There was no smoke condition or anything like that going up.

We stopped at 12. Actually there was emergency service that was with us also. I'm not sure what truck it was. There were actually two emergency services trucks, four guys, and some

Port Authority police also.

We stopped at 12 and took a little break, let some of the people come down. That was maybe a minute or two. Then we proceeded to 22, where the Port Authority command post was, I believe was. That's where we were heading. I think we had -- the gentleman that was in charge of the Port Authority police was with us.

So we stopped at 22. Lieutenant Desperito and I believe one other member of Engine 1 tried to make their way down the hallway on the 22nd floor off the B stairwell to the command post. We were there three or four minutes. The elevator shafts were blown out, so they had to make their way around -- the fire came down the elevator shafts.

We were waiting, taking a breather. People were still coming down. All of a sudden we lost power in the building, and it felt like somebody was shaking the building. We didn't know what was going on, whether our building was coming down or something was shifting.

We all piled into the stairwell again. We were waiting for the boss to come to see what

we were going to do. We weren't sure if we were going up or going down. Other guys weren't sure what was going on.

We really didn't hear much on our radios. One of the Port Authority police, I believe they said they heard a possible collapse, possible terrorist activity.

We proceeded to make our way down the same B stairwell that we came up on. It had to have taken us about 15 minutes to get downstairs. There were no civilians until between the seventh and fifth floors. We didn't say the building was going to come down, because we didn't know. We were trying to push them out.

Q. Do you know who gave you the order to go out of the building?

A. Lieutenant Desperito.

Q. So you got the word from the command center?

A. I believe it was the Port Authority cop heard of a possible collapse. We got to like the third or fourth floor, and you could see a lot of like white powdery dust was coming into the stairwell. When we hit the lobby, there were

guys covered from head to toe in the white powder. I had no clue what was going on.

I got outside. We actually went out of the same door that we went in through the front lobby. I came out, and I was helping a gentleman out to the street. There was a couple of emergency services officers, and they grabbed us. They're like, "Get out of the way! Get out of the way!" We were like "What's going on?" He pointed to the left. Then the whole building was gone.

I didn't know the building came down until we got outside. I didn't even notice that building got hit. That must have gotten hit by the second aircraft on our way down responding to the box. None of us had any knowledge of that.

We made our way -- I think I was on the corner -- I headed north on West Street to the corner of Vesey and West, and we had everybody with us. I was actually going down the stairs with one of the other guys that was with us, Paul Bessler, that day. We wound up coming down together. The other guys were behind us a little bit: Kurt Long, Mike Yarembinsky and Lieutenant

Desperito. Kurt was actually behind me.

Lieutenant Desperito was with Mike Yarembinsky, and Mike was kind of waiting. He said, "Go ahead." He told us to meet outside, make sure everybody was together to meet outside and wait on the corner of Vesey and West.

I believe we were there maybe two minutes, two and a half minutes. We heard the rumble, looked up, and the antenna started leaning and the whole building started pancaking towards us, coming down.

I had my mask on my back. A lot of guys didn't have it. I ran like 10 or 15 feet. I stopped and I put my face piece on, so I didn't breathe all that stuff in. I was just running up West Street. It was a dark cloud getting darker and darker and darker. I wound up coming out somewhere down by Murray or Park Place or something like that. Then I went back.

That's it.

Q. Do you know what happened to Lieutenant Desperito?

A. He was outside the building, supposedly. I don't know the whole story. He

was outside the building, and I believe he got hit in the head with a piece of I beam, possibly. He got hit. He was outside the building.

Q. He made it out?

A. He made it out. He made it out of the building. He was almost there. Two of the firemen, I think one -- he's a lieutenant now. He said him and another fireman -- because he had his helmet on. They saw the Engine 1 headpiece. His helmet shield was still next to him or next to his helmet. He recognized that on the radio it said Engine 1. So they got him right away, they said.

I wound up going to the hospital that day. I had a pulled a groin muscle and my lower back and stuff like that.

Q. Anything else?

A. Like I said, we didn't even know the second building got hit. We really didn't see -- there was tons of people in the lobby. But really everything was going so fast, you really couldn't pinpoint. Even if I had noticed like people said they saw me in the lobby and it's like I remember talking to you, it's like it's --

Q. Like a (inaudible)?

A. Exactly, yeah. Everything is just kind of like fog.

Q. Okay. All right. Thanks a lot, Craig. We appreciate you assisting us. Hopefully we get something out of this.

A. Yeah, absolutely.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The time is 12:45, and that's the end of this interview.

File No. 9110492

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER DOUGLAS FERRETTI

Interview Date: January 24, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today's date is January 24th, 2002. The time is 1400 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the New York City Fire Department. I am conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER FERRETTI: Douglas Ferretti.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Douglas Ferretti is a fireman in Ladder 47 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Ladder 47. This interview is regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Would you please give what happened that day in your own words?

A. We got the run. We heard about the Trade Center on the TV. We got the run down to the Trade Center. We got relocated to Truck 6 from Chinatown. By the time we got to Ladder 6's quarters, the first tower had already come down. Then we got the call to a building close to the towers to check for smoke in the building.

When we checked out the building, it

was due to the smoke from the towers. So on our way out, I was putting my stuff on the rig, and then the second tower came down. It was all hands for themselves. Everybody ran. I ran about two blocks. I saw a revolving door, and I went into the revolving doors, where there were about 15 to 20 civilians in there trying to get cover.

We waited it out from there on in. It was just trying to help people get out of the area.

Q. Did it turn black as night?

A. Yes. It was black about 10, 15 minutes, something like that.

Q. All you did is help some civilians out?

A. Yeah. That was about all we could do, really. We really couldn't get too close to it because we were directly down wind. We couldn't see anything. You didn't know what you were getting into.

Q. Anything else you can think of that might help us?

A. That's about it. That's about all that happened. That's it.

Q. Where did you guys go afterwards?

A. They had a staging area by the church there.

Q. St. Paul's?

A. That's the Church right here at the Trade Center? They had a staging area there. We hung out there for probably two hours. Nothing really happened, so we went on the other side of the wind. We went on the leeward side.

Q. What you understand was the dust particles? Were you doing a lot of coughing?

A. I had one of those dust masks.

Q. It worked pretty good?

A. Yeah. I had a good one. I had one with a valve in it.

Q. Where did you get that?

A. On the rig. My senior man, he had two of them and he gave me one.

Q. Wow.

A. I didn't take mine off. I tell you, when you took it off, it was abrasive. You could feel you were breathing something bad.

Q. Were civilians coughing?

A. Yeah.

A. Oh, yeah. Your eyes are bleeding,
re coughing. I was --

A. I guess I was exposed to it for maybe 20 minutes before I put the mask on. You could feel right away that it could be detrimental to your health.

A. You're welcome.

[illegible]

File No. 9110499

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER WILLIAM CIMILLO

Interview Date: January 24, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KEMLY: This is Battalion Chief Ronald Kemly. Today's date is January 24th, 2002. The time is 1350. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual, Firefighter William Cimillo of Ladder Company 49, from the Fire Department, City of New York. The interview is taking place in the quarters of Engine 68 in the Bronx, regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Would you please tell me what happened to you on September 11th, 2001.

A. I was working on the engine for a guy, one of the members here, who went away. We had an accident on the Degan. About 8:30 in the morning. We came back approximately quarter to 9, when they sent us right back out. We noticed on TV that there was an incident down at the World Trade Center. We heard something over the radio, but we didn't know exactly what it was. When we got here, we realized what had happened was a plane had hit the World Trade Center.

They sent us, 68 Engine, down to -- we originally thought we were going all the way down

to the World Trade Center, they sent us to a staging area at 35 Engine in Manhattan. We got there and were there for maybe five minutes. A bunch of Bronx companies were there, about five of us, five companies: 83, ours, 64, somebody else. I don't know who it was.

When we got there, we were there for five minutes. They sent us right down, right down to the World Trade Center, on the west side. We responded down there. It took us a little while to get down there.

On the way down there, the first building had come down. We had no idea that the first building had come down at that point. We were on the rig. We heard something about a collapse, but everybody was thinking that it was just a floor or whatever.

We had no idea the first building had come down, or even that that first building was -- ah, that the second building was struck by a plane. We had no idea.

We get down to West Street, and there was emergency vehicles everywhere. So we had to park maybe eight blocks away. I'm estimating

about eight blocks away.

We grabbed our gear. We looked up and saw how much fire was in tower two, which was the building that got struck first. Since we were on the west side and that was the north tower, that's the building we could see clearly. We saw fire everywhere.

So we started grabbing our rollups. We figured we were going to hump -- have to put out some of the fire, realizing we're going to have to walk up numerous flights. We put our masks on, we grabbed our rollups, grabbed all our tools that we knew we were gonna need and proceeded to walk down West Street. As I said, we were parked pretty far back because there were so many emergency vehicles there.

I guess in the time it took us to go from 35 Engine to where we were, tower one had already collapsed, which we had no idea that that building was even down at that point. Nobody translated anything to us what had happened.

We were walking down there. They're like, "You're going into tower two. Get up as far as you can and help out." We're walking down

the block. We get to about -- less than half a block away from tower two, and I just remember looking up and the top of the building just teetered and I saw the radio tower wobble and the whole building just came down on top of everybody that was there.

There were companies that I don't know who they were that were 30 yards ahead of us that were a little bit unfortunate because they got caught. We were just further up behind to turn around. There had to be about 50 of us turned and ran in every direction we possibly can to save our lives.

The whole building came down. We got engulfed with that plume of smoke and debris and clouds, the cloud of dust. I finally made it into the lobby of a building, I think up by Stuyvesant High School.

I met up with the lieutenant and started looking for the members I was with. It took us about an hour or so to find everybody. Thank God everybody was all right.

We went back down afterwards. We dropped all our equipment when we ran,

everything. Everything we had in our hands, we just dropped we lost our masks, our rollups, everything. So we had no equipment at that time.

We went down to see what else we could do, but it was complete mayhem at that point. Then we went back to Stuyvesant High School and met up with everybody, and they just told us stay here, stay here, stay here. And we stayed there the rest of the day.

Q. Those companies that were in front of you, could they have been some of those Bronx companies that responded with you?

A. I'm not sure. I really can't tell. There were so many guys there and too many companies. Basically the Bronx companies that responded, we stayed in a group as we went down, because we all responded at the same time. We stayed in a group, and we were walking down West Street. We were just about to enter the building when it came down on top of us.

Q. Who was your lieutenant that you said --

A. Lieutenant Zanat.

Q. And he basically stayed with you the

rest of the day too?

A. Pretty much, yes.

Q. Okay. Unless you have something further, if you remember anybody else that was there that you saw.

A. The usual stuff. You see guys you know when you respond to these things. Other than that -- it was just complete chaos.

Q. Okay. If you have any else -- if you don't, then the interview is over.

A. That's it.

Q. Okay. Thank you.

A. Thank you.

File No. 9110502

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER EDWARD KENNEDY

Interview Date: January 17, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

E. KENNEDY

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today's date is January 17th, 2002, the time is 3:28, and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with firefighter Edward Kennedy of Engine 44 in the quarters of Engine 53.

Q. Ed, just tell us the incident as you recall it on that day.

A. We weren't dispatched until the second plane hit. We were watching. It was in the house watch we were watching as -- you know, we turned the TV on like everybody else, saw that there was a hole in the side of the building, weren't sure whether it was a little plane or was it an implosion or an explosion. But as we watched the TV, all of a sudden the second plane flew in there and hit, and with that we knew right away, we thought it was an act of terrorism.

A minute or two after the second plane hit, we were dispatched to 2 World Trade Center. So as we got ready to go, everyone got in, we took off. Instead of going to 2 World Trade Center, they gave us information on the radio to come down 11th Avenue, that the police had cordoned off 11th Avenue, and that's the

E. KENNEDY

way we went down. They had it all cleared. 53 Engine, as a matter of fact, was right ahead of us. We just followed them down.

We parked on West Street. I really don't know exactly where because there were so many rigs and stuff but back a ways. We had to walk down a few blocks to get down. The lobby command post at that time -- we took extra bottles with us, and the lobby command post was set up across West Street. I guess it had originally been in the towers, I heard, and the flames had come down into the lobby and they had moved across West Street up in front of I guess it's --

Q. The Financial Center?

A. -- the Financial Center. They had the command post set up there and they lined us up and they told us that there was a -- I thought it was a parking lot. From what I understand it was a loading dock. So they wanted the engines lined up on the entrance, the trucks lined up on the exit. So we lined up there. The officer had checked in already and we were standing across from 1 World Trade Center and looking up, I had the hose on my shoulder and my mask on and, of course, I'd never seen anything like it, 20 floors of fire. I'm looking up and I'm supposed to go to Yankee Stadium

E. KENNEDY

that night and it's 9:30 in the morning and I knew right away, I said, whew, I ain't going to Yankee Stadium. I never thought the building, looking up at it, would fall, but I did figure that -- I knew right away that we couldn't put the fire out. I didn't think we would be able to put the fire out. I figured the fire would have to burn out. It was a minimum 20 floors of fire I thought.

As I looked up, some debris was falling and then people started jumping. The scary thing is, as the people were jumping, I was counting, and I got to 15 before an officer from 16 Truck finally said, guys, we're losing our focus. Don't look. We can't help those people. We have to focus on maybe putting out the fire or trying to help the people we can. Turn around and maybe look in.

That's what I did. I turned around and looked in and there was a priest there, one of the Fire Department chaplains, Father Delindick I later found out. I never knew who he was. But one of my members, the guys in my company asked him if he would give us absolution. He gave us a general absolution, said a few prayers, and he said to be careful and with that, shortly after that, people still were jumping and

E. KENNEDY

stuff, an officer came and said 44? We were instructed to go down West Street.

So we left our roll-ups and our masks because we were going to go down West Street. We were ordered to go down West Street and make sure that a lane on West Street was kept open because vehicles were coming in via Brooklyn, coming around the east side drive, coming up the drive, all kinds of cops, emergency vehicles, fire apparatus and everything, and they wanted to make sure that emergency vehicles would be able to get through north and south on West Street.

So as we headed down West Street, I did get a look at the second building, which was far worse than No. 1. When we were standing across from 1, you really couldn't see to No. 2 as well as -- you know, you could see the smoke, but you really couldn't see how bad it was. When I looked, you could tell it was worse. It a lot more fire, it seemed, and it just seemed worse. But as we walked down, we were telling guys, you know, keep your rigs on the side. We walked in front of the hotel, keep your rigs on the side, make sure that we can get through.

As we walked down, there's another overpass on Liberty, right on Liberty and West. There's another

E. KENNEDY

overpass. As we got to there, there was a Hatzollah ambulance there, two Jewish fellows, and they were a little nervous and they were asking, if we have no helmets, what are we going to do? We told them, well, don't walk out. People are jumping, debris is falling. My advice to you would be get in the ambulance and go south, get away from here, because stuff is falling down.

As we said that, I turned to our left, the officer was there, there was an SUV burning on the left-hand side. Now, there's an escalator that comes down off of that overpass. It's a walkway down. It was right next to that. His thoughts were, even though there was like 45 floors of fire, that this might in some way lap up into the air and maybe catch, you know, set that on fire. So when he said maybe we should put that fire out, two of our guys said okay and they ran from under that overpass. They went west. There were rigs park there, a squad and a couple other rigs, and they went over there trying to get Purple K extinguishers or some kind of extinguishers.

As I looked over by the Marriott, I could see 65 Engine was on the corner, hooked up, and hooked up into the Siamese. That's one thing I can definitely

E. KENNEDY

recall that. I'm trying to recall a lot of different things, but that I definitely remember seeing. But as the guys ran over, I also saw that there was a company, I don't know where they came from, there was a company, they were hooking up to the hydrant which was right on the corner of Liberty. They had the same intentions. They had grabbed a length of hose, just hooked up to the hydrant and were starting to open up the hydrant just to put the fire out there also.

So when I saw that and I saw our two guys were going over, I said to the Lieutenant, well, I'm just going to walk south down here a little bit, tell these guys that are pulling in, 113 Truck had just pulled up and they were on the west side of the street and there was another rig coming up, and as I said to the guy with me, Richie Boeri and I, I said to Richie, well, okay, we're going to walk down there and just tell these guys not to block, you know, keep the road open. We took two steps, there was a tremendous boom, explosion, we both turned around, and the top of the building was coming down at us. With this I just turned to Richie and said run.

I ran half a block down, stumbled. My helmet came off. I was like a fox looking for a hole. I just

E. KENNEDY

saw a car, saw the back of a car, dove under the car without my helmet, covered up and held my breath as all the debris and all the wind and everything broke the windows on top. I'm thinking I've got my back -- I don't have my mask. My mask I left up by the command post and now I've got my rear end underneath -- you know, the gas tank is right on my back and I'm thinking, if something falls on this, I'm dead, and I'm thinking, well, maybe something is going to come down the side and I'm just holding onto my head and just praying to God that nothing kills me.

So I was trying to hold my breath. I was trying to get the stuff out of my mouth. I opened my eyes twice. It was pitch black and it sounded like a hurricane coming through. The glass on the car was breaking and it was just, you know, as things settled, it seemed to me it was like 15 minutes. It probably wasn't 15 minutes, but it just seemed to me like it was about 15 minutes. I was underneath the car and then all of a sudden it kind of lightened up. You could tell it kind of calmed down, everything lightened up, and I was pulling stuff out of my mouth, trying to breathe. I had pulled up my hood to try and get it over my mouth so that I could at least breathe a little

E. KENNEDY

bit.

I started talking on the radio to see if any of our guys. I called for the control man. The control man was with the other guy that I said that had gone to get the Purple K or extinguishers. When the building exploded, they ran down Liberty towards the water, and I only got in touch with the control man. The backup man -- I mean the nozzle man didn't have a radio. I said Mattie, Mattie, are you okay? He told me I think I have a broken ankle. I think I have a broken ankle. I said where are you? Where are you? He says I'm heading to the water. I'm heading towards the water. So I said, okay, you head to the water. I said have you seen Bobby? Have you seen Bobby Reeg? Have you seen Bobby Reeg? He said I don't know where he is. I don't know where he is. I said okay, Mattie, head to the water. We'll meet you at the water, I said, but you're sure you haven't seen Bobby? He goes I don't know what happened to him. I haven't seen him.

So with this I roll out from underneath and it's like snowing, it's like ash, it looked like snow, and as I rolled out from underneath the car, I noticed that the officer, my officer, who was a covering

E. KENNEDY

officer, had run and he dove -- I dove underneath the rear of the car. He dove along the driver's side, along the curb, put his face down there, and he was there. I turned around and I saw him, but as I turned around and I looked in the street, there was a Chief yelling in the street. He was in a daze. I went over to him to see if he was okay and I touched his shoulder and he screamed out ahhh! I said whoa, this guy got a broken shoulder.

As I turned to my left, I turned around, Dr. Kelly from the medical office was standing right there. I asked her how did you get here? How did you get here, Dr. Kelly? How did you get here? With that, she didn't even have time to answer me because the guy that I was with, Richie, who I didn't even think of at first, had turned around and he was standing there and he had blood all over his face. I screamed to him, Richie, are you all right? Are you all right? He said, yeah, I just got a cut on my head. I got a cut on my head. But his face was all bloody. But I knew he was all right, so our main concern now is we're missing one guy. We're missing Bobby Reeg. I told it to the officer, he's all right, I'm all right. Mattie's got a broken ankle. He's heading to the

E. KENNEDY

water. We know Richie is there. He's hurt but he's okay. Now we're trying to find Bobby.

Dr. Kelly said she's going to take -- some other firemen came over and they said they're going to come with us, they'll be all right, we're going to take them to the ambulance. Fine. So now we start to try and go back up West Street, but 113 was on fire, there were pockets of stuff burning all over the place, cars were burning. It looked like a war zone. So the officer and I decided, okay, we've got to go get Mattie. We'll see where Mattie is first, then we'll meet Mattie and we'll try and find Bobby after we get Mattie into an ambulance, make sure he's okay.

So we walked down Albany, but before we got to the water, there were people with broken legs and stuff, they were loading them in ambulances, and our eyes were really bothering us. We were spitting out stuff. There was an open store there. We went into a store. There's another road between Albany, as you go down Albany, before you get to the water, there's another street in here, which I'm trying to find out. End. It says End Street. End Avenue?

Q. That might be West End.

A. I don't know if it's West End Avenue, but

E. KENNEDY

there's another street in there, avenue, and it's right by Gateway Plaza, right on the corner there. There was a store there and we went in there and we got some water, tried to rinse our eyes out, which really made it worse, but gargle and try to get some of it out.

I checked a couple of ambulances to see if Bobby was in the ambulance. He wasn't in the ambulance. So I got in touch with Mattie on the radio. He said he was over by the water. We walked down one block, down to the water along -- heading up towards the harbor because that's where he was, right on the corner by the harbor. He had come in that way. We met him and as we were standing there talking, we just sat him down on a bench, people started screaming and started running from that area of the harbor, the marina, and the second building started to come down.

Just lucky for us that there was a police car, a police van there, and we jumped into the police van. We got Mattie into the police van with a couple of cops, and the building was kind of shielding us from heavy debris, but debris still came over and the dust and everything, and at least we were able to breathe because the engine was running and it was air-conditioned and at least we were able to breathe.

E. KENNEDY

At that moment I'm thinking, well, maybe I should go in the water because there were boats in the water. I'm starting to get a little paranoid now and saying maybe I should take my stuff off, jump in the water, get in a boat, at least I'll be all right, because I didn't know -- at that point I didn't have any idea, you know, I didn't see the other building come down. We just heard it rumbling and crashing and people screaming that it was coming down and we ran and jumped in.

I mean, I never knew the first building that came down, No. 2, I didn't know that the whole building came down because I really couldn't see. What I saw was the top of the building, the top quarter of the building come down, and I never knew until later on that the whole bottom, that the rest of it had pancaked down, because I couldn't see because of all the dusk and the smoke and even, I don't know, how many minutes later, however it was.

Basically, we got Mattie. After we had come out, we tried to rest him and everything was pretty chaotic. Somehow alongside this plaza here, what do they call it, around the plaza, it goes down to Battery Park, right along the water, the walkway there, there

E. KENNEDY

was a guy with a golf cart and he had some people on it, and we got Mattie on the golf cart because he had a broken ankle, which really was hurting him a lot now. We put him on that and the guy took him down and what he did was he got on one of the boats. They stopped those boats along there and he got on a boat and he went to Jersey.

So now the officer and I figured we've got to try and find Bobby. So everybody we came across that we recognized, people from 16 Truck and whatever, we tried to look for Bobby and we searched for Bobby. We went back out to Albany Street and tried to walk up, and it was totally chaotic. We really couldn't get up that way. So we walked our way back up Albany, up by the marina and up through, and got down into Liberty Street. We were on Liberty Street and we came out into there and it just look like something that -- it looked like a bomb, of course, had gone off, almost like a nuclear bomb. That's all I could think of. I've never been at war. I equated it to being like when I saw something like when I was a kid and I saw Godzilla in the movies or something, when he crushes those buildings and stuff like that, that's what it looked like to me.

E. KENNEDY

At that moment, we knew he was in that general area, but there were crushed vehicles, I mean, guys now were trying -- there was water there. I don't know where the water came from, but there was like puddles of water and stuff. I don't know if it was from hoses or whatever had been stretched. But guys were trying to climb up and look in all the stuff and stuff was still smoking and burning and stuff was teetering.

Finally, I don't know who it was, some Chief or somebody, somebody said, I want everybody on the radio, everybody back out, back out. So they wanted them to back out like into Liberty Street, back away from it. Guys were upset with that at first, but he said we have to assess the situation first. We want to make sure nobody else gets hurt. There was big metal beams and whatever they call those stanchions and stuff that were stuck in the ground, stuff was piled, stuff was teetering still. It really wasn't a safe scene. So whoever was in charge at that point on the radio was saying everybody back out, let's back out, let's size up everything, let's get everybody together, then we'll assess the situation and we'll go in and try and search and find out what's what.

E. KENNEDY

So we did back out. We backed out back to the marina because then our eyes again were starting, especially the officer I was with. By the end of the day he was blind. He couldn't see at all. I was walking him around. But we went back to the marina and someone had set up a little hose there. At this time now there were boats starting to come in, like some police boats had come in there and stuff like that and they were taking people periodically, they were taking people. Now the fire boats were starting to come in and pull along, so a couple of us, we decided, you know, somebody got together or one of the officers said let's go, we've got to stretch some lines out.

So we stretched lines. We went back down by Albany Street and we had pulled out lines and we were stretching lines back out there and they started pumping and trying to put the pockets of fire here and there out. But I was between Albany, the marina and Liberty most of the day trying to find Bobby. Everybody we came across, we tried to get in there, and we walked. We finally were able to get from Liberty back down to Albany walking among the stuff and seeing stuff turned upside-down, but we couldn't find Bobby anywhere.

E. KENNEDY

Finally, after about three or four hours, three hours of searching for him, I came across a guy that was the battalion aide from 13 Truck and I asked him if he saw Bobby, and he said he saw Bobby. He says he was alive. He says he knows he's hurt, he doesn't know if it's his shoulder or what, but he was slumped and they had put him in an ambulance. So that made the officer who was a covering officer feel a lot better, and at least I know, well, he was okay. I saw another guy that was driving, a guy in my company, I can't even think of who he was driving, one of the Chiefs that got killed, but he told me he definitely saw Bobby, too. Most of the day we spent -- we tried to get our eyes -- we tried to get into some -- there was a drugstore there that they had opened up and we tried to get some saline, we tried to get someone from the ambulance, they washed our eyes out because we were having the problem with the eyes and spitting up.

But right in here by Liberty, by Gateway Plaza, there was a hotel that's right there. That was on fire. Then again we stretched lines up there to try and get that fire, put that fire out. There was a fire on the 7th floor. We got the lines up there. There was enough water in the tank up there to just put out

E. KENNEDY

that fire. It wasn't really big, but there was a fire up there.

We were just basically standing around trying to coordinate, trying to find out what's going on and helping people, whoever was hurt, and asking if you'd seen people, coming across people, you know, do you know what happened to this guy? Have you seen this guy? It really was a total disaster, so for a while it was out of control.

Maydays? I did hear a Mayday. I did hear a Mayday for 65 Truck, and the way I understood it, I thought he was buried in his truck. I later found out that the chauffeur from 65 Engine was the guy, when I said in my story in the beginning, by where the escalator was coming down, he had taken a length of hose off of his engine and hooked it right onto the fire hydrant and was opening the fire hydrant when the building came down and he was caught right by that escalator that was coming down from the overpass on Liberty. He was buried in debris underneath there, and the Mayday was coming from -- I guess somehow he got a Mayday out, and I thought that he was in the fire engine, but little did I know that the fire engine was buried and whatever.

E. KENNEDY

That was the only Mayday that I remember, and to tell you the truth, the only guy that really stands out in my mind that I remember being on the radio was Chief Visconti. I remember him talking and giving directions and this and that. But this is as the day was going on and, of course, there were so many transmissions going over. I remember him screaming about 7, No. 7, that they wanted everybody away from 7 because 7 was definitely going to collapse, they don't know when, but it's definitely going to come down, just get the hell out of the way, everybody get away from it, make sure you're away from it, that's an order, you know, stuff like that. I don't really remember too much of the transmission about 6 Truck, but I ran into 43 Truck and they were telling me the story about it, so I kind of knew about that.

But most of the day we were just doing what we could, stretching hoses here, hanging out by the boat, going over by the marina, washing our eyes out, going back up into this area by Liberty Street and Gateway Plaza, and most of the day was just doing what we could, what little we can. Somebody was coming over here, humping hose here, humping hose there, searching through debris, looking for people.

E. KENNEDY

Finally, one of the guys in my company who was on light duty came, he found us and, I don't know, sometime around 6:00, 7:00 o'clock, we made our way up to try to find my company. I heard that they were there and that the guys had come down and I had made my way back up the west side through the back way here, over by 2 World Financial Center, behind there, by the Winter Garden and up, somewhere on Vesey, and made my way up to the school, what's that, Stuyvesant school, where they did my eyes, which felt good.

Then I ran into my company and I hung out with them for maybe an hour there, and then my officer told me, you know, you're doing no good anymore being here, you've been here long enough, to go back to the firehouse. I don't even know what time we went back to the firehouse. Basically --

Q. That's it?

A. That's it in a nutshell.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. Thank you, Ed. The time now is 3:48 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110503

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PAUL BESSLER

Interview Date: January 21, 2002

Transcribed by Nancy Francis

P. BESSLER

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 21st, 2002, the time is 1:05 p.m., and this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Paul Bessler from Engine 1 in the quarters of Engine 1.

Q. Paul, just tell the events as you recall them from September 11th.

A. Okay. I'll start with Engine 1's arrival to the building. We responded to the north tower and we proceeded up to the 22nd floor. When we got to the 22nd floor, there was a staging area for I believe it was the Port Authority Police, and our proby was having chest pains, and my Lieutenant, Andy Desperito, gave an urgent for Firefighter Craig Dunn, probationary firefighter, which kind of slowed us down a little bit. We would have continued up, but we wanted to make sure he was getting assistance. His urgent was given and it was answered. I don't know by who.

So we were going to proceed up. He was in good hands with the Port Authority cops. While we were in the hallway, we were taking a breather, the south tower fell. We all thought it was a secondary

P. BESSLER

explosion or maybe a plane, but we never knew that the south tower fell. We just knew, whatever it was, that it was really bad. So the lights had gone out and the ceiling tiles fell and we all turned our flashlights on and went into the staircase to get shelter because the shafts were open. On the 22nd floor, some of the elevator shafts were actually open. I don't know who had said it but they said, you know, get into the staircase, and we all went in the staircase. The emergency lighting was on.

Andy actually started going up the staircase, which, in my mind, I thought he's not going up the stairs. After what just happened, this is not good. There's something we don't know. He was on a mission to go up the stairs. The brothers were up. Just at that point, my radio came clear as day, "Imminent collapse. This was a terrorist attack. Evacuate." That's exactly what I heard. I think that was Chief Picciotto that was giving the order. We relayed that again, hoping that the brothers would hear it above us, and I remember the look on Andy's face, like apprehension that we were going to leave this building.

Q. What's Andy's last name?

A. Desperito. Andy Desperito.

P. BESSLER

Anyhow, he looked at me and told me to take Craig, the proby, and get him out safely, which I did. I grabbed Craig by the collar and said come on, we're getting out. I started going down the stairs, everybody behind us. We came across that woman, Josephine Harris, who was saved by Ladder 6. I stopped for a moment, and just as I did, the staircase kind of got clogged because we blocked the landing and just for a moment I looked thinking how can we help this lady? All of a sudden I hear somebody yelling go, go, we got her. I look up and it's Andy and sure enough he's going to help everybody, Andy, you know? We started going back down the stairs again because I figured, okay, she's not going to be left. We continued on our way.

We got to about the 4th floor and the emergency lighting now was dim, covered with white powder and whatever, and we caught up to the civilians. They were kind of backed up. What happened was, I guess, it was dark at the bottom of the staircase and I shined my flashlight and started yelling for people to move and, eventually, with our lights, they were able to see and it kind of flushed everybody out and all those civilians were able to get

P. BESSLER

out of the staircase ahead of us. I was expecting like a pileup. I didn't expect to be able to get out of the staircase, to tell you the truth.

When I got down to the lobby, now the lobby was a disaster. It was slippery. It was just -- you know, it wasn't the same lobby that I came into it seemed. We got to the lobby and there was a Chief. I don't remember who he was, but he screamed at us and pointed, and he pointed towards West Street, which we went out right to the building. When I got to the apron, I looked up to see if any more -- there was a lot of jumpers and people were still jumping and we looked up to make sure it was clear, put our heads down and we ran out.

Q. Just one thing. When you said he was screaming at you, he was telling you to leave?

A. Yes. Go, go, and pointing towards West Street, just yelling, go, go, go. I expected maybe to hang out in the lobby for a little, you know, not thinking I was in danger. So we went out. We realized. We said, you know, he's ordering us to get out, so we did, and that's how we kind of got separated from our guys because now he's telling us to go, so now there's a distance between the guys in the staircase.

P. BESSLER

So we get out to the apron, look up to make sure it's clear. I was with the proby. I didn't want anything happening at this point. We just crossed the barricades and started walking and there was all that white dust in the street. It was like a five-inch snowstorm, like just fresh powder. We were actually making footprints in it. I didn't see anybody outside except for just the jumpers. I mean, we really didn't see anybody and it was really bizarre. It was surreal. It didn't make sense. There were so many people on arrival and now there's nobody, and we never knew the south tower fell still.

Just as we got towards the walkway, I looked back because I heard what I thought was another jet, and it was the building on its way down already. My guys had just came out. They were on the apron and they were just going to cross the barricade and stuff was -- the debris was on its way down and we just ran. We had our masks on. Our face pieces were actually on because the proby was having problems with chest pains, having difficulty breathing, so even when we were on the 4th floor, I made him put his mask on and I did the same thing.

So we had our masks on and we were running

P. BESSLER

towards Vesey Street as fast as we could with all our gear, and as we were running, thinking we're never going to make it. It was just ridiculous to think you were going to make it. We both wound up getting knocked down by the blast, I guess, from like a pressure wave. It took us off our feet. My helmet flew off. We got up and just continued running, and then the dust cloud just engulfed us, and basically it was over our head like two or three blocks but down. It kind of went -- it's hard to explain on tape, but the dust cloud had gone further up the block, higher. The lower section was like a few blocks back. So it kind of stayed on us the whole way, and all the guys I knew were behind us in it and I never thought I'd see them again, you know.

We made our way out of there. I got Craig to an ambulance and they took him immediately, and just as they were putting him in and prepping him in the ambulance, they said there was a gas leak and we heard some secondary explosions and all the ambulances and ESU trucks kind of took off in the other direction. So now I'm running by myself in the dust with nobody left from my company, and I started calling on the radio, you know, anybody from Engine 1? I was just asking

P. BESSLER

anybody seen Engine 1? I didn't get any response at all. So it was just a lonely feeling. I didn't quite understand what really took place.

After a while I found a couple of guys that I know and they said that there were guys looking for me, so I knew that a couple of my members had made it. In the back of my mind, I just never thought -- I was hoping Andy Desperito was okay, but I kind of didn't think he was going to -- you know, it was too close for us, so anybody behind us, I really didn't think they made it. I found a couple of my members and found out about Father Mike and found out that -- I guess it must have been maybe 40 minutes to an hour, they already had found Andy. They found his body. It wasn't confirmed but it was confirmed to me by guys I trust.

We made our way back to the command post, which was now on Vesey Street, I guess, and we didn't know what to do. We were there, we had no boss, and we just kind of wandered around aimlessly thinking what can we do? We can't go look for our boss. We've already found him. Like what are we supposed to do at this point? So we decided we would just go back to the firehouse and try to deal with everything and kind of report the story and try to find out who made it, who

P. BESSLER

didn't, from the truck.

That's pretty much it. I mean, sparing all the details, you know.

Q. All right. Well, if there's anything else you want to add --

A. No, that's pretty much it. I got it wrapped up into a short story now.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: Okay. Well, thank you, Paul.

FIREFIGHTER BESSLER: You're welcome.

BATTALION CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 1:13 and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110504

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER FITZROY HAINES

Interview Date: January 25, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 25th, 2002, and the time is 11:53 a.m. this is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Fitzroy Haines of Ladder 15 in the quarters of Engine 4.

Q. Fitzroy, just tell us the events as you recall them from September 11th.

A. The alarm came in at 8:45. That particular day I was going to work that morning the morning tour. I was there waiting to leave, me and another gentleman. When the alarm came through, the dispatcher said all units stand by. There's an explosion at the World Trade. That's all we got here.

That day Lieutenant Levy and Captain Farrell was working. They shot downstairs and said everyone get dressed because you know we're going. We're right here.

I was already down, not dressed, but I got dressed and I was the first one to come out. I noticed -- the buildings were to my left -- white smoke and paper floating our way. I yelled

back to everyone, "We've got something pretty big there."

Right before the rigs came and pulled out, Doug Oelschlager and Scott Kopytko pulled up. They were working that morning. Scott bumped me off the rig. I told him he had the eyes. He said okay, and he went with the truck.

I parked Oslagger's car, because he pulled up on the first bay here, parked his car across the street, then came inside. Being the World Trade, I figured it would be on the news. So I walked into the house watch, turned on the TV, and I saw that I guess it was the north tower was on fire. I just know it was which one of them, it was way up on like the 80th floor, whatnot.

At that moment another firefighter, Tom Ryan, who was going to be detail to someone else, came in and said, "They're going to need a lot of help. I'm going to go over there." I asked him if I could go, because I was off and I'm a proby. I didn't want to get in trouble. He said, yes, just stay close to him. I said okay.

I was already still in my bunker gear.

As soon as he grabbed his gear, we went out in the street, and Battalion 4 was shooting up the street. We flagged them down, and we jumped on with them.

The chauffeur wasn't sure if he should take the tunnel or the street. By the time he had an inkling, he was already halfway through the tunnel and he got stuck. Tom and myself had to jump out of the car and run -- rushed through the tunnel and clear out the tunnel, because at that end the cops didn't know what was going on. We really didn't know what was going on either.

By then I guess while we were in the tunnel, that's when the second plane hit. I still didn't know it was big commercial planes that hit. I noticed that it was like no traffic on the other side of the tunnel.

The police officer that was out there started sending the cars back through, because by then we couldn't have backed up because there were more emergency vehicles behind the chief. We just wanted to get everyone through.

As soon as the chief got cleared, we jumped right back in. We were coming up, and I

noticed that 15 Truck was by the Mayor, kind of far down from the Trade Center. I asked Tom should we get out here for our guys. He said no, stay with the chief.

I figured that was kind of weird that they were so far down. Come to find out later that they had cut an air hose and that's why they seized up a couple blocks down. I guess they got out and walked the rest of the way.

So we pulled up in front of the south tower because there was really no one in the street. We didn't see any command center. The chief told the chauffeur go down towards the north. As soon as we did, we saw the command post. I believe that was seven financial, right in the parking lot.

Q. On West Street?

A. On West Street. We were on West Street. It was more like --

Q. Near the Winter Garden atrium?

A. Yeah, right there. They were in the parking lot.

The first thing I thought was it took us all of about seven minutes to get there, but I

noticed that the Mayor, the Commissioner and a lot of other officials were already there before us. I thought that was kind of weird. I found out later that they were there for a meeting earlier. So okay.

I don't know which chief it was, but he put Tom and myself under I think it's Captain Brethel, I think was his name. He's the captain of Ladder 24 with Engine 1, I believe. He was supposed to be in charge of all the fat guys that are coming down to volunteer and whatnot.

The reason why we didn't go in the towers was because we only had one Scott pack and we were waiting for more gear and more cylinders to be released. So we were under the pedestrian walk bridge that's in front of first World Trade, about ten yards away from the command center. We were staged there. We were there for quite a while. The only thing I was doing was just counting the bodies that were jumping.

I would say after a good 20, 25 minutes, the captain came up to us and said, "You guys really don't need to see this. Just go down West Street like a block and a half towards Vesey

Street and stage there." So we walked towards Vesey Street, not all the way. I took off my clothes and staged there.

By the time I did that, that's when the south tower collapsed. Everyone just said "Run." I was in the street, but there were just too many people. I noticed there were too many vehicles and people coming down the street. I felt that was kind of dangerous. I jumped back on the sidewalk because I know the fence -- there's a chain link fence that runs all the way down West Street. I knew if I couldn't get out of that crowd that would be a safe reference point if I walked all the way down.

So I ran all the way down. A couple seconds just before the cloud came over me, I knelt by the fence and put my hood over my mouth and let it come over me. Then I got up and just followed the cloud out.

I found one guy that was sprawled out. I picked him up, helped him out. There was another female. She was just walking. I told her the right way to walk out.

I walked out of the cloud. I let it

settle for a little bit. Then I went back out and got my coat because I had staged it, and came back. By then I found Tom, who I went down with. We were down I guess around Barclay then, staged around Barclay street, because we were waiting for everyone to form back up to see if we could get anyone out of the first collapse.

But the main chiefs that were there were just telling everyone stay put, stay put. They were sending whole companies and units down to see if they could get anyone out of the collapse.

By then I noticed -- we found I believe it was Bob Humphreys, the Engine 4 chauffeur, was walking towards us. We helped him off with his gear and tried to wash the debris off some and whatnot.

We were there for like, I guess, 19 minutes or so. That's when the second one collapsed.

Q. Now you're at Barclay and West?

A. Yeah, Barclay and West. All this day I never left West Street. When the second one started to collapse, we went down further towards

the high school that's there. I think it's --

Q. Stuyvesant?

A. Stuyvesant or Lafayette?

Q. I'm not sure.

A. It's either Stuyvesant or Lafayette High School. That's where we went. We walked all the way down there, staged there. Pretty much the remainder of the day I was there, because the chiefs didn't want anyone going back in. They were trying to get a head count of who was actually there and whatnot. That was pretty much it. I stayed there for the remainder of the day.

Q. Thank you, Fitzroy.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 12:02, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110505

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER CRAIG CARLSEN

Interview Date: January 25, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 25th, 2002. The time is 1:50 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan from the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Craig Carlsen from Ladder 8 in the quarters of Ladder 8.

Q. Craig, just tell us the events as you recall them from September 11th.

A. We were down at the medical office going for our annual medical. We got into the medical office. We heard that a plane had hit One World Trade Center, the north tower. When we got into the medical office, of course the TVs were on and everybody was focused on it.

It was approximately five minutes to 9. As we were watching the events unfold, we realized our company was down there for it. That's when we saw the second plane hit. At that point we decided to find out from -- we had our medicals, and find out if we were supposed to leave or stay for our medicals, which we got permission to leave, and we left the medical office.

We went out into the street and commandeered a couple of cars. Some people went in one car, and another person and myself had gotten into an ambulance along with another lieutenant that was down at the medical office, and we proceeded over to my firehouse to pick up gear, we realized we had to pick up the gear to go down to the job.

We pretty much got over into quarters of Ladder 8 at approximately 10 after 9 or so. We picked up our gear and proceeded down to the Trade Center. We almost caught a ride from Engine 235, and they had no room on their rig. They proceeded down, and we caught the next -- just a van that was going downtown.

As we got down to the location, we got dropped off a couple of blocks away. I don't really recall what street we got dropped off on, but I think it was Barclay and West. The lieutenant and I traveled down to where Ladder 8's rig was to find out, see if we could hook up with Ladder, looking for the command post.

I proceeded into One World Trade Center into the front lobby. Just making it into the

door, I ran into 3 Truck, members of 3 Truck, which told us that there were numerous people trapped in elevator cars and that they needed forcible entry saws.

So the lieutenant and I went out to look for forcible entry saws. Of course most of the rigs that were around the area, the first few rigs, there was really no tools even left on the rig at that point. So we had to go to -- I couldn't even tell you how many rigs we looked in before we actually found the saws.

On my way back in towards coming back to Ladder 8's rig, coming around the rig, I had found a saw. I don't remember exactly what rig was from. I came to a complete halt because something came down and hit the street, and I didn't realize what it was until I looked up further and saw that there were bodies coming down, quite a few of them, which had to stop me in my place because I couldn't really get back into the building because of it.

At that point the other officer that I was with, the lieutenant, decided -- we hooked up together, and we decided that we found where the

command post was now I guess relocated across the street on West, straight across from One World Trade Center.

We decided that before we went back in the building let's see if we could pick up some masks and a radio before we got into the radio, and also check in with the command post. By this time I guess it was probably 20 to 10 or so.

So we went over to the command post, which at that point my company that was at the medical office had just gotten there also. We all decided that we should just team up as a team before we went in to keep as a unit. Of course we checked in with the command post, and we were told to stand by. We checked in with Chief Ganci and a few other officers at the scene.

As we were waiting around, they told us to just stand by. They were doing something with the eight track system. They were trying to find out if they can figure out how they can control it. So they just us to stand by.

We waited around I guess 10, 15 minutes. As we were standing there looking up, we were getting an idea of -- doing like a

size-up and you could see there were numerous people hanging out of the windows. Of course other parts of bodies dropping.

I guess about three minutes later you just heard explosions coming from building two, the south tower. It seemed like it took forever, but there were about ten explosions. At the time I didn't realize what it was. We realized later after talking and finding out that it was the floors collapsing to where the plane had hit.

We then realized the building started to come down. At that point everybody at the command post took off into -- there were two garages across. I guess it was by Two World Financial Center next to the Winter Garden, just a little bit south of the north bridge. Everybody took off into an underground garage.

I made it in about 20 feet inside the door, and I tripped over an EMT who I guess broke his leg and was disabled. I pretty much just stayed there and tried to comfort him. Before I had gone into the garage, I grabbed a mask.

At that point, that's when the building started to come down. It was already coming

down, and you could see the force of air coming towards you. I was just trying to drag the EMT down the ramp. That's when the blast came, and now you're just trying to don the mask.

I don't remember -- time is now -- I don't have a clue with it. It seems like when it finished collapsing I heard somebody scream that we were trapped. We figured that the whole building came down on top of us and that we were trapped inside underneath the garage.

I decided to just crawl out to see how far, if anything was actually up against the building and what-have-you. I just crawled out and did a search of the area of the command post and whatever else as far as you could go. At that point, that's when we realized that we actually weren't trapped into the building.

We just waited for the dust to clear and did a search. I found a police officer lieutenant that needed help and took her out. I took her through the building and just her off on Vesey and West Street to other police officers, making my way through the building.

I started heading back down towards

number One World Trade Center just from Vesey and West, going towards the north bridge. On my way back down, I was just looking, and I saw my company coming out of the building or actually from underneath the north bridge, 8 Truck coming out. One, two, three, four, five guys. I was happy to see them, that they got out. I knew they were in the building, but I wasn't absolutely sure what building they actually went into.

As I ran into them, we just started heading back up north on West Street. We made it to approximately Vesey and West, which is just north of the bridge. Then the second building started to come down.

At that point everybody just took off in all different directions. As far as I know, we just went north up West Street. I would guess we made it up to Barclay, maybe, and whatever it was knocked us down, the force of the wind or maybe pieces -- I had a Scott pack on. It knocked me down. I had lost the face piece. I just crawled underneath a DOT truck, one of the trucks, and just waited it out. This time I

thought we were so close that I was not going to make it.

Pretty much the same thing, when it all started to clear a little bit -- you had a hard time just worrying about breathing. Same thing, when it started to clear, you did your searches, you picked up who you could, and just traveled northward.

Of course everything was covered up and you didn't really -- I don't recall what members that you picked up because it was pretty chaos. You did what you could, and that was about it.

Q. When the north tower was coming down, did you have any indication? Did you hear the explosions again? Did anybody warn you like they heard on the radio or anything like that?

A. I didn't have a radio, because we were coming from the medical office. So I never did get a radio. So I wouldn't have heard that, if somebody had said it.

You did hear the explosions. Of course after the first one -- the first one was pretty much looking at it like in awe. You didn't realize that this was really happening because

you kind of just stood there and you didn't really react as fast as you thought you were going to.

The second one coming down, you knew the explosions. Now you're very familiar with it. Of course when I looked up, all I could see was the antenna coming down. You pretty much just pick up and take off. Everybody was on their own, I guess.

Q. All right. Thank you, Craig.

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 2:04 p.m., and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110506

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL MACKO

Interview Date: January 25, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF KENAHAN: Today is January 25th, 2002. The time is 2:23 p.m. This is Battalion Chief Dennis Kenahan of the Safety Battalion of the Fire Department of the City of New York. I'm conducting an interview with Firefighter Mike Macko from Ladder 8 in the quarters of Ladder 8.

Q. Mike, just tell the events as you recall them from September 11th.

A. On the morning of September 11th, it was a few minutes before 9. I was listening to the radio in my yard, and I heard a report of a plane hitting the Trade Center, or sketchy reports of a plane hitting the Trade Center.

I went to the front of my house, where you could see the towers from my neighborhood, and I saw a large fire in the north tower. I'm pretty sure it was the north tower.

I called my mom, told her to pick up my kid. I figured it was going to be a real large job. I was going to go down and maybe help out in the street or something, do what I could. I knew the guys were going to need help down there.

I jumped on my motorcycle, stopped at

the local firehouse, which is Ladder 130. The officer there said they did have a recall. I got on my bike and raced off to Manhattan. I went through the Midtown Tunnel, made it to the firehouse in a relatively quick period of time. They had police lanes set up and everything through the tunnel. A lot of emergency equipment headed down to southern Manhattan.

I got to the firehouse. The firehouse was empty. I jumped into my gear. I went outside on Varick Street. An ambulance that was going down south on Varick Street stopped. I jumped in that. They made their way down what I think was Barclay Street. That's about as far as the ambulance took me.

He stopped. I got out. It was pretty much like a war zone at that point. I hadn't even known that the other tower had gotten hit at that point. I saw a few rigs. Not too many people around. I tried to look for some tools. I had my gear on. I didn't have a mask. I was actually looking for a mask.

Q. At this point the first tower was already down?

A. No, nothing was down at this point.

I made my way onto West Street, still looking for a flashlight, a radio, some equipment that I could use to maybe try and search or help out. I end up going south on West Street. I ran into a couple guys, one guy from Squad 18 and a detail that I've seen from the previous night.

We were making our way down West Street. We got just about south of the north overpass, about 50 feet past that, when the first collapse occurred. I looked up. I was awed by -- I thought it exploded at the top. Everybody I guess at that point started running, and I luckily ran north where I came from to try to run out from under this -- which happened to be a collapse, realized I couldn't. I was going to stay under the overpass.

I realized I couldn't get out from under the collapse. I dove under an ESU truck that was facing north on the west side of West Street. I dove under that and waited for the building to come down.

When the building did come down, I actually thought I was trapped, and the truck was

blown off me, pushed off me, I guess. It was not there. At that point I was just really shocked and didn't know what was going on at that point. I didn't know -- I was really, really shocked.

I ended up hooking up with a guy from 18 Engine or Squad 18. Scott, I think his name was. We made our way across West Street to the World Financial Center and broke through a lobby window in there and made our way out the other side of the lobby.

At that point I encountered some I guess emergency personnel that were trying to help, you know, guys that were coming out of the collapse at that point. I sort of assessed myself and found that I didn't have any real physical damage. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

What seemed to be a few minutes later, the other tower had collapsed. At that point I made my way along the water. I was more toward the water at that point. I ran across some guys from my company. We gathered up and to figure out who was missing and tried to get a hold of who was missing.

I ended up coming back to the firehouse. I found out one of our lieutenants was unaccounted for. We made our way back -- I made my way back down towards what is now called ground zero and worked down there with what seemed like maybe 100, 150 members and chiefs, trying to do what we could to help out the situation.

I worked down there until about 1:30, 2:00. I was pretty exhausted. It was a real hot day. I did some work on a line, gathered some equipment for Chief Pfeifer, got him a mask and stuff, got some rigs running, got a pumper running. All the rigs were shut off. I moved one or two rigs into position, got them pumping some water. A lot of fires burning.

That was about it. About 2:00 I was pretty exhausted. I made my way up to Stuyvesant. That was about it for my participation in the fiasco or whatever it was.

Q. Thank you, Mike?

CHIEF KENAHAN: The time now is 2:29, and this concludes the interview.

File No. 9110510

WORLD TRADE CENTER TASK FORCE INTERVIEW

FIREFIGHTER PATRICK MARTIN

Interview Date: January 28, 2002

Transcribed by Laurie A. Collins

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Today is January 2th, 2002. The time is 1230 hours. This is Battalion Chief Frank Congiusta of the Safety Battalion of the New York City Fire Department. I'm conducting an interview with the following individual.

Please state your name.

FIREFIGHTER MARTIN: Fireman Patrick Martin.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: Fireman Martin is assigned to Engine 229 of the New York City Fire Department. We are at the quarters of Engine 229 regarding the events of September 11th, 2001.

Q. Pat, in your own words, if you would please tell us what happened.

A. We heard the second alarm come in for the World Trade Center. We were still in quarters. From our quarters you can see the World Trade Center. We have a veranda. We went on the roof. We were watching. Roll call happened. We all went down to the apparatus floor. We thought that we might be going, so we were readying ourselves.

We were out in the street. I saw the second explosion happen on the south tower. I thought it was a radiant heat explosion to the building. I didn't see a plane hit, but we saw the large ball of fire. It seemed seconds after that we got dispatched to go to the north tower.

As we were responding, we heard the total recall come in. We took the Brooklyn Bridge over. We got one flat tire as we were going. We kept going. I guess we were traveling west on Vesey Street. We came to West Street. There was no way to go south. So everybody got off the rig other than the chauffeur. The chauffeur started heading north.

We started walking south on West Street. We got under the first pedestrian walkover. We could see the people jumping. We could see a lot of people jumping. You could hear them.

We were going down, and it seemed like there was a command post along West Street approximately -- I guess it would be this Merrill Lynch building. Maybe it was a little further down. They told us to move 105's rig. That was

the first assignment we got. 105 was parked in the middle of West Street, and they wanted to clear the way for the ambulances to get through.

So we put down all of our gear. I wasn't assigned chauffeur, but I am a chauffeur. So they had me get into 105's rig, and basically we backed it up maybe 100 feet or so to get it to the side of the road.

At that point there the lieutenant said, okay, just stand here. We'll get our gear together, and he'll go get reassigned. Time was weird. I don't know if he came back and had gone back or he was told to go to another command post. But we were standing there for a while. Basically we were on West Street in front of the hotel.

That's where we saw Timmy Stackpole standing there. We looked and he was just on the west side of West Street, basically, just north of the south pedestrian bridge. I don't know how long it was after that that the towers came down.

We were looking up. You saw the smoke coming out. We really didn't have an assignment yet. Our lieutenant came back. I can't remember

if he actually gave us an assignment of what we were going to do or what, but it was right then that we heard the noise.

My lieutenant said he looked down at the first floor, and he auto see the first floor of the south tower like exploding out. I looked up. I looked up, and the sky was filled with that debris cloud. You could see the debris coming down, pretty much toward us. We were standing underneath it.

At that point there we made 180 degree turn, and we started running south on West Street. I'm pretty sure we made it under the south pedestrian bridge. I don't know whether we got all the way to Albany Street or not, but we were able to make a turn and we were alongside the building.

We didn't know that the whole tower had come down until later on. We heard it and we knew -- the whole sky was filled with the debris. You could see it coming down. Whatever it was was coming right at us. So we went.

When we were there, there was a bunch of civilians there, a bunch of firemen. We were

all choking. The cloud came in, blinded, choking. We told a couple civilians to pull their T-shirt or shirt over their face.

I had my mask on. I didn't use it because I knew I was still breathing and I didn't know what was going to happen in the next ten seconds. So I said my Hail Marys.

There was pretty much a good quiet there for a while. There was an eerie kind of silence. Then you could start to see again. Civilians were starting to cry and carry on. I gave a little bit of air to people that were complaining that they couldn't breathe, told them to go toward the water, go west.

At that point I had no clue where my company was. There was nobody there. I started calling out for 229. I heard nothing.

Q. You heard nothing on the radio like to get out of the building or anything?

A. After the silence, the radio became really crowded. So my looking for my company didn't seem that important rather than the maydays that came through.

I headed down toward West Street where

I saw my company the last, and I found my lieutenant. I was control man of the day, so I had a radio, he had a radio. We decided to split up. He made me go further south. I went not much further and decided, you know, just calling out to try to find our company.

Again, time-wise I don't know how long it was. I never found anybody. He found two more guys. One guy was pretty much blinded by the dust. He couldn't open his eyes. So he sent the other guy and the guy who was really hurt with his eyes and took them to I guess it would be the Hudson River there. I guess there was a boat there that was going across to the hospital. He put the two of them on.

Then I met my lieutenant again, and he wanted me to go on the boat. I told him I wasn't leaving. We were still missing one guy. So after I told my lieutenant I wasn't leaving him alone, we split up again. This time I came up. I came up because we were by the water. We came up Albany. I went north on whatever street, End Street, to about Liberty Street and went back to the debris field. There was a lot of debris

here.

Then I heard the noise again. I don't even remember seeing anything of the north tower coming down. I don't know if I saw it or not. Climbed out of the debris field, and I was alongside Liberty Street. I know I made the turn here.

In the building there was like a cutout where I could get like underneath the building. There must have been a door there; I can't remember if there was. This time I remembered I was all by myself thinking, oh, now I'm going to die by myself. I could hear the building shaking as the building was coming down. You could hear the whole building shake.

Again, you couldn't see, you couldn't breathe. I pulled my hood over just my mouth and my nose to try to keep the heavy dust out. I didn't use my mask. I just waited until you could see again.

When you could see again, I looked on West Street. There was nobody moving on West Street. I couldn't hear. There was no noise on the radio.

I must have gone back toward Liberty -- toward End Street or End Avenue, because I couldn't get into West Street. I found my lieutenant. At this point here we couldn't find the other guy. He started asking for him on the radio. We were still missing one guy.

We looked around. We decided at that point we weren't going to separate each other. We were going to stay together now. We looked around the debris field. We looked around this whole area where we were. We couldn't find anybody. Time was moving along.

We couldn't get in touch with our chauffeur, so then at that point we decided to go -- we had to go all the way up to this park to get around, because you couldn't go along West Street anymore. So you had to go up. I think we were on the other side of -- I don't know. What is this school? The school is that far?

Q. The school is up here by Chambers Street.

A. No, that's way too far.

Q. You probably came around to Vesey, because then you could come on Vesey.

A. All right. Vesey was where everybody was kind of staging later on?

Q. Yes.

A. Yeah, we must have come around this park. Is this all building here?

Q. Yeah, that's all building.

A. Yeah, then it must have been here.
Yes.

Q. You could have walked through this building.

A. I don't know. The tall park, I don't remember where it was. This was all gone. We found him I think it was further north like they kept on pushing him north. Then we did find him.

We stayed there for a little while, went back along West Street, and eventually -- I think the last guy we found on the north side of West Street. I don't know how he got there, but he said -- he didn't have a radio. He said he said, "229, this is Fireman such and such. I'm okay." He said somebody on the radio said, "Okay," thinking that it was us, and he started going to work. We never heard any of that.

Now there were the four of us. At that

point there we went back to the debris field. We did some hose stretching. We really were pretty done by that point to do any kind of rescue work. We helped guys stretch lines, and they had us stage at different spots along the way.

We were lucky.

Q. Anybody that walked away was lucky.

A. When the first tower came down, it was obvious if we would have ran one way -- if you went down Liberty Street -- we could have went to Liberty or north -- we were dead. We just ran this way, and it was the right way to go. We all went the same way; how, who knows.

Q. Anything else?

A. No, not that I can think of.

CHIEF CONGIUSTA: The time is 12:50,
and that concludes this interview.

Thanks a lot for your cooperation, Pat.

FIREFIGHTER MARTIN:: Thanks Chief.